NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

ISBN 0-315-55607-2

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

'With His Left Hand': The Occasion and Style of Milton's *Areopagitica*

By

Arlette Marie Zinck 

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE

STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1989

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: Arlette Marie Zinck

TITLE OF THESIS: 'With His Left Hand': The Occasion and Style of Milton's *Areopagitica*.

DEGREE: Master of Arts

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: Fall 1989

.....(Arlette M. Zinck).....

(Student's signature)

100 Ironwood Place
Edmonton, Alberta
T6J 6R4

Date: ..5 October 1989.....

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled 'With His Left Hand': The Occasion and Style of Milton's *Areopagitica*, submitted by Arlette Marie Zinck in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

.....

(Supervisor)

.....

.....

Date: October 5, 1989

In Memoriam

Lee Harold Zinck

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines John Milton's *Areopagitica* and discusses four key aspects of the document: the historical era and personal circumstances which occasioned *Areopagitica*, the form of the argument, the substance of the argument, and finally, the document's influence, both on its own time and on the present.

Chapter one examines how the civil war and Milton's experience in writing and presenting the divorce tracts shaped the development of *Areopagitica*. Next, chapter two discusses the structure of *Areopagitica* and how, despite their logical outward form, the arguments in *Areopagitica* in fact deviate from formal deductive reasoning. In chapter three the rhetoric of Milton's argument is assessed, and finally, in chapter four, the influence Milton's document had upon its seventeenth-century audience, and the relevance of *Areopagitica* to twentieth-century censorship debates are considered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Dr. James F. Forrest. Like the many students he has had under his tutelage during the past thirty years, I have been inspired by his excellent lectures, guided by his wisdom and knowledge, and renewed by his kindness. I would also like to thank Dr. H. A. Hargreaves for his careful review of this thesis and his many helpful suggestions. Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Robert Betty, and my family, both in Halifax and Edmonton, for their support and encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One

Public and Personal Crises: the Civil War, Milton's Divorce Tracts and their Influences on *Areopagitica*

In order to appreciate the style and beauty of what is generally agreed to be John Milton's most outstanding prose work one need only read the document itself. Even without an understanding of the issues or the events that brought about *Areopagitica* the modern reader can still marvel over its rich and evocative imagery and revel in its many timeless expressions and astute encapsulations of Christian philosophy. A complete appreciation of *Areopagitica*, however, requires that the details concerning the immediate national and private occasions of the document be examined. John Milton's *Areopagitica* is not an esoteric discussion of religious liberty or unlicensed printing, but rather an actual response to a specific parliamentary order; it is not the work of a sequestered and dispassionate observer, but rather the product of a sincere and powerful mind, fully engaged in its subject. It is for these reasons that an understanding of the intellectual milieu and historical events that precipitated *Areopagitica* is critical both to an appreciation of the text itself and to a clearer understanding of the mind responsible for its creation. *Areopagitica* is the product of the Protestant Reformation and the English civil war, but it is also the direct result of specific events and intellectual developments that occurred to and within John Milton himself.

In examining the events and ideas that occasioned *Areopagitica*, this discussion will focus on the religious and political issues that most concerned Milton. It will begin with a brief review of the events leading to the civil war and then concentrate on the years immediately preceding *Areopagitica* (1642 through 1644) when the issues of supremacy, church government and toleration were under public debate. Finally, it will examine the more personal events and the changes in Milton's own beliefs that made *Areopagitica* possible, and in fact, necessary.

Recently it has been popular to reinterpret the developments immediately preceding the civil war in terms of an economic class struggle or a battle for constitutional reform.[1] Although both of these issues certainly played a role in the civil war, it is the pressure for religious reform that offers the strongest thread by which this particular phase in British history must be unravelled. Even if constitutional and economic issues were foremost in the minds of some Englishmen in the years preceding 1642 (as was no doubt the case) these priorities were not shared by John Milton. As Christopher Hill points out, for Milton, the civil war was only one step in a long process of religious reformation that began with John Wycliff in the late 1300's (Milton 86). This view is reflected in the prose works written by Milton between 1641 and 1644. As Milton

---

[1]The strongest case for an economic or Marxist interpretation of these events is offered by Christopher Hill in his two books *The English Revolution 1640*, and *Milton and the English Revolution*. J.W. Allen presents the case for a constitutional reading of the civil war in his book *English Political Thought 1603-1660*.

states in the often-quoted passage from *The Second Defence*,[2] his plea for unlicensed printing is but one of three aspects of domestic liberties on which he chose to write during the years he dedicated to securing the liberty of his nation. Like the great protestant reformers John Wycliff, Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Knox, the hope of "purifying" the church and creating a truly Christian nation burned bright in Milton and in many of his contemporaries. *Areopagitica* reflects the hopes of John Milton, Englishman, that his nation may be freed of all encumbrances to become "a standard for the recovery of lost Truth" (Milton, Of Reform 44).

The specific occasion for *Areopagitica* is the Licensing Order of 1643 and its demand that:

> no Order or Declaration of both, or either House of *Parliament* shall be printed by any, but by order of one or both the said Houses: Nor other Book, Pamphlet, paper, nor part of any such Book, Pamphlet, or paper, shall from henceforth be printed, bound, stitched or put to sale by any person or persons whatsoever, unlesse the same be first approved of and licensed under the hands of such person or persons as both, or either of the said Houses shall appoint for the licensing of the same, and entred in the Register

---

[2]John Milton, *The Second Defence*, trans. Robert Fellows, *The Prose Works of John Milton*, edited by J.A. St. John. Bohn Library (5 vols., London, 1848-1853), I 258-59. The passage reads as follows:

> When the bishops could no longer resist the multitude of their assailants, I had leisure to turn my thoughts to other subjects; to the promotion of real and substantial liberty; which is rather to be sought from within than from without. . . . When, therefore, I perceived that there were three species of liberty which are essential to the happiness of social life -- religious, domestic, and civil; and as I had already written concerning the first, and the magistrates were strenuously active in obtaining the third, I determined to turn my attention to the second, or the domestic species. As this seemed to involve three material questions, the conditions of the conjugal tie, the education of the children, and the free publication of the thought, I made them objects of distinct consideration.

> Book of the Company of *Stationers*, according to Ancient custom, and the Printer therof to put his name thereto. (Licensing Order, 797)

In other circumstances this order might have been dismissed as an understandable war measures act to combat propaganda. When the order was issued, Parliament was engaged in the eleventh month of civil war against its King. To Milton, however, not only was the order itself a source of contention, but its resemblance to the more stringent Star Chamber Decree of 1637 recalled distasteful memories of governmental and ecclesiastical abuse under the rules of James and Charles Stuart, and thereby provoked his reply.

The turmoil and seething discontent that eventually resulted in civil war essentially began with the reign of James I, King of both Scotland and England. James ascended the throne in 1603, five years before Milton's birth. Justification for both the economic and constitutional interpretations of the civil war may be traced to the reign of James I. During this period, the groundwork for general discontent was laid as taxes were continually raised to meet exorbitant expenditures, and the role of Parliament was diminished by James's insistence upon the Divine Right of Kings. His biggest mistakes, however, involved the church. James I was raised as a Calvinist. This fact led the Puritans to hope that he would be sympathetic to their cause. This was not the case. As the editors of *Seventeenth-Century Verse and Prose* note in their introduction, although James's predecessor Queen Elizabeth had been a source of frustration for the Puritans, she was much less offensive than James:

> Queen Elizabeth with her crucifix in her chapel, and her impatience with clerical impertinence, and her all too

> obvious disinclination to further change was trying enough to those who desired a more thorough-going Protestant reform. But James I, with his various, as it seemed to the Puritans, dallyings with Rome, and his schemes for a Spanish marriage for his son and heir, and his tolerance of Recusants, and his obvious distaste for strong preaching on the duties of the Head of the Church from Puritan preachers, was worse. And meanwhile the Church of England by law established was more and more assuming a character and an institutional temper and personality that must from day to day and week to week have proved more disheartening to Puritan zeal than any doctrinal pronouncement. (White 5).

The Millenary Petition of 1603, in which approximately 1,000 ministers asked for reform of abuses, was all but ignored by James. The Hampton Court Conference of 1604, in which the Bishops and Puritans met to resolve differences, is memorable for two reasons: the commissioning of the King James Version of the Bible, and the otherwise flagrant disregard shown to Puritan requests. Finally, James's decision in 1606 to restore the bishops to Scotland ultimately resulted in two bishop's wars. These issues are compounded by the King's more personal offences. James was known for his appointments of "favourites" who were given considerable influence over public policy, and he was accused by Sir Simonds D'Ewes of "the sin of sodomy" (Hill, Milton, 18). General discontent with James I was reflected in the Petition of Right, presented to his son and successor in 1628. The petition called for an end to all forms of taxation without consent of Parliament, an end to billeting of soldiers in private homes, an end to commissions paid to military officers executing martial law in peace time, and finally, an end to imprisonments made without charge. Charles I gave assent to this petition on June 7, 1628, but he was not long in producing new

grounds for offence. In January of 1629 Charles called a new session of Parliament. Disputes over tonnage and poundage claims of privilege resulted in a skirmish in the House of Commons where the speaker was forcibly retained in his chair while the Resolutions of Eliot were read. The resolutions declared all who spoke out against the "true church," and those who either levied or paid tonnage and poundage duties without the consent of Parliament, as enemies of the state. In retaliation for the outburst, Charles suspended Parliament for eleven years.

During these years Charles faced the same problems that had haunted his father. War debts were rising, and with Parliament suspended Charles was without a legal means of securing additional funds. In order to solve his financial problems without recalling Parliament he began collecting "ship-money" from all seaboard and inland towns under the pretence of offsetting the costs of navy protection for coastal towns and cities. He sold monopolies, and he hired the services of two lawyers, Noy and Finch, who revived an obsolete law compelling all landowners earning 40 pounds a year or more in rent to be knighted, and to pay a handsome sum for the privilege. All of these actions were very unpopular, but this third proposal caused particular unrest among English citizens. The outdated law would have at one time applied only to very wealthy landowners, but over the years and through inflation it now applied to most middle class citizens of seventeenth-century England. Through the revival of this law Charles was able to charge fees to a broad population base and to levy heavy fines against all who had failed to comply with the law during its obsolescence. In 1640

Charles was finally forced to account for these injustices when Scotland's first Bishop's War and England's general financial distress gave him no other option but to re-convene Parliament.

Despite the severity of the economic and constitutional injustices that prevailed during this time, it is important to note that it was the religious concern that stirred Scotland and eventually England into military action. The first Bishop's War of 1639 was the direct result of James's re-institution of the bishop's office in the Scottish church in 1606. In order to appreciate the significance of James's action and the backlash it caused, the history of the Protestant Reformation must be borne in mind.

The reformation that eventually swept across all of Europe may be traced to the late 1300's in England and to the "Morning Star of the Reformation," John Wycliff. In his protestations against the clergy and general church corruption, Wycliff condemns the practices later satirized by Geoffrey Chaucer in his Friar's and Summoner's tales. Wycliff rejected church doctrines like transubstantiation; he asserted that Christ should be man's only overlord; and he insisted that clergy should not be permitted to own property. These beliefs gained support from many people who were sceptical of the Catholic Church's tradition-based doctrines, and who were tired of both paying high taxes to Rome and contending with the inflated and often corrupt power of the local clergy. Although his doctrines led to his condemnation as a heretic in both 1380 and 1382, the spirit of Wycliff's reforms was reborn in Germany almost 100 years later under the leadership of Martin Luther. Luther, a monk and a professor of theology at the University of Wittenburg, was incited by

corruption like the selling of indulgences to begin his campaign for reform. The 95 theses or propositions that he nailed to the church door in Wittenburg began the most radical phase of changes in the church. In these theses, Luther denied the Pope's authority and called for a return to a biblically based faith. He concluded the document with a challenge to debate any opponent. Luther's challenge was never accepted, but the Diet at Speyer, which was held in 1529, concluded by condemning the Lutheran faith and outlawing those who practiced it. This action resulted in the "protests" of Lutheran Princes and associates, and eventually in a civil war between these Protestant Princes and Emperor Charles V. The Protestants won this war, and in 1555 the Lutheran faith was officially sanctioned, and both Princes and subjects were given the opportunity to choose between the Lutheran and Catholic faiths. In 1533, shortly before this sanction occurred, the third generation of reformers was beginning in France with the conversion of John Calvin. Following his sudden conversion, Calvin began preaching the protestant faith in France. When it became unsafe for him to continue living in France, he moved to Geneva, Switzerland, where in 1536 he published *The Institutes of the Christian Religion.* Calvin's austere piety was based on beliefs similar to those of Luther, and at one point there was a movement to bring the two leaders together. Luther refused to accept Calvin's beliefs regarding the Eucharist and the doctrine of predestination, however, and the merger never occurred. Calvin's beliefs and those of his co-worker John Knox are distinguished by their emphasis on representative government in the church. The ministers are chosen by the members, and "elders" or

"presbyters" serve as chief officers. Calvin's Presbyterian church eventually dominated Geneva where Calvin himself became the virtual ruler. Through John Knox, the Presbyterian faith was established in Scotland and preached in England. Through the teachings of Calvin and Knox, the Presbyterian faith may be credited with having sped the shift from the agrarian medieval economy to the emerging commercial and industrial economy (Bridgwater 168). This shift was aided by the advent of the "protestant work ethic" -- the values of hard work and thrift that were taught by Calvin and Knox as essential to the realization of God's work on earth.

One hundred years later, the blatant disregard of these ethics by both Scotland and England's Stuart Kings, and their apparent endorsement of such "papal" customs as episcopacy and other corruptions in church government, inspired the Scottish Presbyterians to revolt. Although the Scottish people may have submitted to the Stuarts' economic and political abuses with a stoic determination to "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's," they declared war to defend the reforms of their "true faith" (KJV Matt. 22:21).

The Crown's disregard for church reform in England during the years of suspended Parliament fuelled the political engines for a similar revolt in England. In addition to his efforts to introduce the Church of England practices to Scotland, the powerful Archbishop Laud also enforced conformity on English citizens. His 1633 order to inrail the communion table was denounced by Milton and others as an effort to change the *communion* table into "a table of separation" (Milton, *Of Reform* 53). Laud's punishments for Puritans who

refused to follow Church of England forms resulted in a mass exodus of several thousand Puritans to the Massachusetts Bay colony. When the Scottish rebellion finally forced Charles to call the fourth Parliament, the parliamentarians were eager to play their advantage. Accordingly, Parliament withheld all funds from Charles until grievances could be settled. Charles refused the condition and dissolved what came to be called the Short Parliament. Six months later, in November of 1640, The Second Bishop's War and the Royalist defeat at Newburne-on-the-Tyne forced Charles to call members back to a new sitting of the House of Commons. This time Charles had little choice but to agree to the reforms presented to him. Archbishop Laud as well as the Earl of Strafford were both impeached and subsequently held under a bill of attainder until their execution; the Triennial Act was passed to ensure the summoning of Parliament at least once every three years with or without initiative by the King; finally, and most importantly, the Root and Branch Bill for the abolition of bishops was passed. These radical changes were followed by still more amendments. In 1641, the Courts of the Star Chamber and High Commission were abolished. The Court of the Star Chamber, which was originally included in the English constitution to provide a means of prosecuting very dangerous and influential criminals, had recently been used by Laud to persecute his Puritan opponents. Dr. Henry Burton, Dr. John Bastiwick and William Prynne had dared to speak out against Laud. They were convicted by the Star Chamber and subjected to the brutal sentence which dictated that their ears be sawed off and the men themselves thrown in prison. This act of terrorism by the Archbishop raised much public

support for his adversaries and much hatred for the Star Chamber. Although all of these amendments were passed, it was not long before the King rebelled against the parliamentary constraints. On October 21, 1641, Parliament convened to discuss the disturbing news that over 30,000 Protestants had been massacred in an Irish Catholic uprising in Ulster. Parliament wanted to raise an army to defend its interests in Ireland, but it was not yet ready to trust the King with military forces. In an attempt to assure themselves of Charles's support, Parliament presented the King with a summary of the grievances of his reign. For the first time Charles began to sense a weakness developing between the radical Presbyterians and the more moderate Puritan members of the Commons. In an effort to take advantage of this apparent weakness, Charles refused the summary of grievances and demanded the impeachment of five key members of the Commons. The Commons, however, refused the order of arrest. In a final bid to press his very marginal advantage, Charles and a few hundred soldiers stormed the House and attempted to seize the five members on January 4, 1642. The members, however, were not to be found. Having received advance word of the King's intentions, the five were removed from the House of Commons and kept in London under guard. On January 10, Charles took the Great Seal and removed to York. Two attempts were made by the Commons to have the King assent to their propositions, but both failed. On August 22, 1642, Charles raised the Royal Standard at Nottingham and the Civil War began.

During the year immediately preceding the Civil War, John Milton had left his comfortable life of study and writing to dedicate

himself to the political concerns of the day. Although he had already shown signs of his brilliant poetic talents with works like *Lycidas*, *Comus* and "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," in 1641 he put aside his projects to engage in the public dispute over episcopal versus puritan forms of church government:

> 'I could not,' he said 'be ignorant what is of divine and what is of human right; I resolved, though I was then meditating certain other matters, to transfer into this struggle all my genius and all the strength of my industry. (Dole vii)

During the time between spring of 1641 and August of 1643, Milton published five anti-episcopal tracts: "Of Reformation Touching Church-Discipline in England," "Of Prelatical Episcopacy," "Animadversions," "The Reason of Church Government," and "An Apology." When Milton began his writing, Parliament had established its control and had begun amending various grievances. During the time between the commencement of the Long Parliament and the spring of 1641, however, cracks began to emerge in what had once been the solid resolve and unity of the Parliament. Once having ascended into power, the hitherto unapparent differences between the radical Presbyterian and more moderate Puritan members began to emerge. It was this split that Charles had hoped to exploit when he stormed Parliament on January 4, 1642, and it was this split that compelled Milton to throw his energies behind the anti-episcopal lobby.

For Milton, the argument against the episcopacy presented itself readily in the Scriptures. Thus, the argumentation required to support his lobby conformed easily to Milton's own philosophy

whereby Scripture was believed to be the sole source of divine revelation. As Arthur Barker points out in his study, *Milton and The Puritan Dilemma*, however, Milton's views did not go uncontested by his opponents, and neither did they go without reconsideration by Milton himself. In fact, a good portion of the responses against the scripturally-based, anti-episcopal argument actually anticipated changes that were to occur in Milton's own thinking following his disillusioning experiences with the divorce tracts:

> The men, like John Hales and William Chillingworth, who made up at Lord Falkland's house a *convivium philosophicum*, had perceived more clearly than the Puritans, or than the Milton of 1641 and 1642, the inevitable consequence of the Protestant appeal to Scripture against ecclesiastical authority. They met the Roman assertion that it meant confusion, not by proposing the establishment of a new authority, but by announcing their confidence in the mercy of God and in the findings of 'reason illuminated by revelation out of the written word.' . . . They did not believe (as his Roman antagonist appeared to assert) that men were to be given over to reason guided only 'by principles of nature,' by prejudices and popular errors, to come to their beliefs by chance. They were to follow 'right reason, grounded on divine revelation and common notions written by God in the hearts of all men, and deducing, according to the never-failing rules of logic, consequent deductions.' (Barker 82)

As Barker notes, at the time these views were first presented Milton was first among his puritan peers to condemn such doctrines as ignoble attempts to justify human error by only selectively following divine laws as they are presented in the Bible. Over a very short period of time, however, circumstances dictated that Milton reconsider these early beliefs.

In the meantime, Charles's removal to York focused public debate on the issue of supremacy. Although Milton did not contribute a document dedicated to this debate, he attended to similar issues in the anti-episcopal tracts and incorporated the central concern over natural and divine law which emerged from this debate over supremacy into both his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and *Areopagitica*. In his comprehensive summary of background to Milton's prose tracts, Ernest Sirluck provides an in-depth discussion of the complexities and subtleties of the term "law" as it was applied in England during this period and as it related to the supremacy debate. Without repeating this discussion, suffice to say that the already ambiguous and imprecise distinctions made between *lex*, *jus* and *nomos* served to make the ensuing debate between the legality of actions by both the King and Parliament very confusing (Sirluck 12). Since both the King and Parliament had formally been bound together through constitutional law and through custom, the independent actions of both now had to be justified. As Sirluck points out, the debate began with Parliament's proclamation that Charles had broken the law, and that its actions must thereby be justified as a means of preserving this law. In what was to become the most famous statement of this position, William Pym justified the Commons in a speech to Parliament which was subsequently published under order of the House:

> That which is given me in *charge*, is, to shew the *quality* of the *offence*, how *hainous* it is in the *nature*, how *mischievous* in the *effect* of it; which will best appeare if it be examined by that *Law*, to which he himselfe appealed, that *universall*, that *supreme Law*, *Salus populi* : This is the

> *Element* of all *Laws*, out of which they are derived; the *End* of all *Laws*, to which they are designed, and in which they are perfected. . . . There is in this *Crime*, a *Seminarie* of all *evils* hurtfull to a *State;* and if you consider the *reasons* of it, it must needs be so: The *Law* is that which puts a *difference* betwixt *good* and *evill*, betwixt *just* and *unjust;* If you take away the *Law*, all things will fall into a *confusion, every man* will become a *Law* to *himselfe*, which in the *depraved condition* of *humane nature*, must needs *produce* many great *enormities: Lust* will become *Law*, and *Envie* will become a *Law*, *Covetousnesse* and *Ambition* will become *Lawes*. . . . The *Law* is the Boundarie, the *Measure* betwixt the *Kings Prerogative*, and the *Peoples Liberty*. . . . The *Law* is the *safeguard*, the *custody* of all *private interest:* Your *Honours*, your *Lives*, your *Liberties* and *Estates* are all in the *keeping* of the *Law;* without this, every man hath a like *right* to any thing. (Sirluck 14-15)

As Sirluck notes, these words were to ring in Parliament's ears for much time to come as, when Parliament was eventually forced to break the "law" in order to proceed with its duties, the King swiftly returned to Pym's argument and used it against Parliament. What eventually arose out of these disputes was a refinement of Parliament's philosophy of government. A shift was made from the position where justification was based on Parliament's right to uphold the law, to a position where justification was based on its power to create law. This right to create law was based on a belief in the divine sanction of a "natural law" wherein self-preservation and justice are manifest. In the latter part of 1643, when this debate began to give way to a renewed debate over church government, Milton turned his attention to the "domestic liberties" and specifically to the topic of divorce. In his pamphlet the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, the idea of a "manifest natural law" forms a central part of

his argument, as does the issue of divine revelation through reason, which had earlier surfaced in the episcopal debates.

Although the rather embarrassing chronology that led biographer David Masson to conclude that Milton wrote the first divorce tract on his honeymoon has since been proven false, the personal motivation this error implies remains a legitimate means of at least partly understanding the circumstances that led to *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. Although Sirluck notes that there is still some reason to believe that Milton was favourably disposed to the doctrine of divorce before his own circumstances gave him cause to consider it in more detail, he also observes that, "when the blow fell on himself, this favourable opinion became an urgent conviction which he thought it his duty to promulgate" (138). Milton soon discovered that his newly substantiated beliefs regarding divorce required considerable accommodations and changes of his former opinions regarding the scriptures as the sole source of divine revelation. In order to confute Christ's own injunction against divorce, which is recorded in Mathew 19:3-9, Milton was challenged to re-evaluate the theory of "right reason" that was earlier put forth by his opponents in the episcopal debates. By the time he began *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* this theory was fully embraced by Milton. He who once held the Scripture to be the only source of divine guidance was now a passionate proponent of reason as "the candle of the Lord" that guides men of sincere intentions to a more complete fulfilment of God's own desires for their individual lives. With this development came a willingness to accept the inevitability of both good and evil and the necessity for each individual to choose

between virtue and vice. As Arthur Barker observes, these newly acquired views not only influenced the divorce tracts, but they became the fundamental principles upon which *Areopagitica* was constructed:

> It required the events of 1643 to bring out the implications of his belief that man's understanding was proportionable to truth if he would purge it of the effects of sin. In the early pamphlets the emphasis falls on reason's depravity; in the *Areopagitica* it is thrown where Falkland [Milton's former opponent] placed it, on reason's potentialities. The conclusions of the *Areopagitica* are those at which the Christian rationalists had long since arrived. (83)

Not only did the divorce tracts facilitate the intellectual changes that made *Areopagitica* possible, but they also provided the large measure of humiliation and disillusionment Milton required to get "the power within" him "to a passion" (Areo 487). Much to Milton's disgust his views were roundly rejected by his former allies. On three occasions leading up to the publication of *Areopagitica*, in fact, Milton was mentioned by name as one of the primary sources of the depraved and blasphemous material to result from unlicensed presses. Having been impressed with the press's power to dissuade and persuade public opinion by the written exchanges that occurred during the episcopal debates, Parliament had immediately set about an attempt to harness or at least control this power by revising and re-establishing dormant licensing legislation which, despite Milton's claim in *Areopagitica* that licensing was a "Spanish invention," had in fact been operating in England one hundred and thirty-seven years before the council of Trent (Sirluck 158).

Licensing played a very active role throughout England's history. As Fredrick Seaton Siebert notes in his study *Freedom of the Press in England 1476-1776*, the effectiveness of the licensing policies that operated at various points in Britain's history must be calculated by evaluating three factors: the variety of controls put in place by government, the degree of effort made to enforce these controls, and finally, the degree of compliance these efforts received from the populace (Siebert 1-2). During the years of the Tudor reign all three of these factors were at their peak, and as a result, stringent control was maintained over the publishing industry. With the advent of civil war, however, this situation changed. With the general dismantling of the Crown offices, the mechanisms for enforcing licensing orders were also either abolished or rendered impotent. Although Milton implies in *Areopagitica* that this loosening of state control over printing reflected a more liberal attitude towards the press, evidence suggests that this was not the case. As Siebert observes:

> The freedom which the press enjoyed during this short period was due to the failure of enforcement agencies and to the pressure of other issues rather than to any belief on the part of the Parliamentarians that the press should be free. In fact, Parliament turned its attention to the regulation of the press at the earliest possible moment. (Siebert 174)

On June 5, 1641, for example, the Commons authorized the Stationer's Company to take actions to "suppress and hinder" printing (Siebert 174). Soon, however, the Commons was displeased with the Company's efforts and as a result, took matters into its own charge. On August 26, 1642 both houses agreed to establish a temporary

licensing system, and finally, on June 14, 1643 the Ordinance for the Regulation of Printing was declared. While the intent to suppress printing was apparent, the system designed to enforce the ordinances was less than effective. The administration of the licensing legislation was shared by a number of committees, including the Committee on Printing, which was assigned the duty of seeking out the names of both the author and printer of Milton's pamphlet on divorce (Siebert 189). Despite these committees, the works of Milton and his fellow pamphleteers continued to be published. In general Parliament's reaction to these illegal documents was predictably negative, but this was particularly true of their reaction to the divorce tracts.

Although the ideas of polygamy and "divorce at pleasure" expressed by Milton in this pamphlet are still considered largely unacceptable today, the vehement negative reaction this pamphlet received in 1643 is still indicative of the conservatism and conformity that began to unsettle Parliament and complicate efforts to reform the episcopal system of church government. Of course matters were also complicated by the on-going demands of the civil war.

In the latter half of 1643, the need for military support from the Scots for the war brought about negotiations that eventually concluded in the signing of The Solemn League and Covenant on September 25 of the same year. In many respects, the subtle changes in wording made to the final version of the Covenant by the English parliamentary negotiator Henry Vane summarize the issues

of concern to Parliament at this time. The proposal initially put forth by the Scots was worded in the following manner:

> The preservation of the true Protestant reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, and the reformation of religion in the Church of England, according to the example of the best reformed churches, and as may bring the churches of God in both nations to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of government, directory for worship and catechising that we and our posterity after us may, as brethren, live in faith and love. (Gardiner 230)

The changes made by Vane are as follows:

> The preservation of the true Protestant reformed religion in the Church of Scotland in doctrine, worship, discipline and government according to the word of God and the reformation of religion in the Church of England according to the same Holy word and the example of the best reformed Churches . . . (Gardiner 230)

Although the change was slight, it served to retain for England the liberty of controlling its church, rather than resigning this control to the Scottish Presbyterians. As Robert Baillie, one of the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly observed, "The English were for a civil league, we for a religious covenant" (Gardiner 229). In his comprehensive four volume discussion of the *History of the Great Civil War*, Samuel R. Gardiner explains the vast differences that existed between the Scottish Church and English people, despite their common commitment to religious reformation.

> The Scottish clergy were likely to be the last to perceive that what was possible in Scotland was impossible in England, or that a nation whose middle classes had been disciplined under the Tudor monarchy, and had already ceased to feel alarm at the pretensions of the nobility, would never place itself under the Presbyterian system. Such considerations

> were entirely alien to the thought of the seventeenth century. It was, therefore, with natural eagerness that the Northern clergy urged the assimilation of the English to the Scottish church. (Gardiner 227)

As Gardiner notes, the Scottish clergy were at this time engaged in a program of strict discipline in order to deal with the power they had recently attained. To the clergy "the support of religion was all in all, and strict as they were in the matter of doctrinal orthodoxy, their strictness was still greater with respect to the observance of the Ten Commandments" (Gardiner 226). In their zeal to live up to the power they achieved, and to create the Godly nation they believed their achievement sanctioned, the Scots Presbyterian church followed the examples of intolerance set by Luther, Calvin and Knox, and became oppressors themselves. It is an unfortunate comment on human nature that the sincerity and dedication that inspired the Reformation also inspired in the reformers a high degree of intolerance for any deviants to their particular reforms. As Milton later observes in *Areopagitica*, all of the reformers were anxious for a response to their prayers for reform, but when this response was received many were unable to embrace it:

> Yet when the new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy, and oppose, if it come not first in at their casements. (562)

Luther rejected Calvin; Calvin had the dissenter and physician Servetus burnt at the stake. This intolerance may have been the result of the reformers' fear that their example of rebellion may be interpreted as license to justify sin. Whatever the motivation, however, this intolerance drove the Scottish clergy to "inquisitorial" measures to ensure that all was as it should be. Severe penalties

were imposed on those who failed to observe the sanctity of the Lord's day, and during the course of a few months "no less than thirty unhappy women were burnt alive as witches in Fife alone" (Gardiner 227). It should come as no surprise that many Englishmen were less than enthusiastic about resigning the government of their church to the Scottish Presbyterians. In England the debate over church government covered the extremes of complete freedom of religion, to arguments (largely put forth by the Assembly) in favour of immediate alliance with the Scots. Eventually this debate was altered slightly to focus on the issue of tolerance in general. The plea for toleration of the sects initially began as a rather insincere ploy by members of the Baptist sect to secure a legal forum in which they could impose their beliefs on others (Sirluck 75). The first sincere examples of the tolerationist point of view were offered by Roger Williams. Williams had been banished from the Massachusetts Bay colony, and through this experience he had learned the real limitations of the reformed church. Although Williams wrote several other pamphlets before *Bloody Tenant, Of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience Discussed* was published on July 15, 1643, this is certainly his most famous work. In this tract Williams puts forth the concept of distinct civil and religious government. He declares the church to be wholly spiritual and the state wholly "natural." He concludes with a plea for toleration of all sects, Jews, Roman Catholics and even unbelievers. Of course this tract led to much public scorn and ridicule for its author, but this did not inhibit either Williams or the debate in general. A multitude of opinions and criticisms emerged in pamphlets exploring various approaches and degrees of

toleration. Ultimately, in the cases of Henry Robinson, William Walwyn and John Milton, this debate also became a forum for argument against the licensing of printing.

Although *Areopagitica* must be counted among the tolerationist arguments, the impetus for *Areopagitica* can be traced not only to this issue, or even to the Licensing Order itself, but also to the circumstances that arose following the reception of his divorce pamphlet. To Milton's great disappointment the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* met with almost universal disgust. The reviews Milton received from men who he had once trusted and respected resulted in Milton's rejection of his puritan associations and in his mistrust of the Presbyterian members of Parliament who he now believed to be no better than old priests "writ large." The most violent denouncement came from William Prynne. This same man who had earlier suffered physical disfigurement and prison for his heretical views and his criticisms under Archbishop Laud, now became an oppressor himself. He urged Parliament to suppress Milton's heretical and immoral beliefs in "divorce at pleasure" (Sirluck 142). Despite the ridicule he suffered at the hands of Prynne and others, as Sirluck notes, Milton was in the fortunate position to benefit from the support of the tolerationist coalition who were willing to defend Milton's right to free speech even if they disagreed with his views (Sirluck 142). For example, both Henry Robinson and Henry Burton defended Milton to Prynne by asserting that a convincing counter argument based on the Scriptures would be a more effective means of squelching the argument than suppression or force.

Although Milton was the first to write a pamphlet exclusively dealing with the licensing issue, he was not the first to broach the topic. On March 24, 1644, Henry Robinson included a plea for unlicensed printing in his tract *Liberty of Conscience: or the Sole Means to Obtaine Peace and Truth.* Robinson argues that religious conviction is not alterable by force, and further, that when such force is applied it only serves to separate conscience from belief. The remedy proposed by Robinson is a forum for free and open debate where beliefs may be assessed and challenged. This forum required an unlicensed press:

> And if being confident in mine owne Religion, I cannot possibly be brought to thinke otherwise by force, what ever violence make me posesse outwardly to the contrary, then will it be necessary to proceed by fair meanes, that all reasons and inducements being aledged with equall liberty and freedome on both sides, the whole controversie may be fully stated and understood to the self-conviction of heresie and errour, which if other Nations of different Religions may not be permitted, and by that means freely declare and expresse the grounds whereon they built their faith, how false soever they be, they cannot possibly be convinced thereof, but will be so much more hardned in their opinions, conceiving them the founder, by how much you restrain the publishing thereof, and when they see you intend to persecute them, denying an equall and indifferent triall, they will be gone again with a far more prejudicall conceit of the Protestant Religion then they had before. (Haller III 135)

A second criticism of the licensing order was incorporated into William Walwyn's *The Compassionate Samaritane.* This document, which was published just four months before *Areopagitica*, bears the closest resemblance to Milton's pamphlet. Like Milton, Walwyn begins his document with a complimentary address to the Commons.

In this address he states his disbelief that the Commons, which has spent so much time "in recovering the common liberties of England, should in conclusion turne the common into particular" (Haller 61). But in absolving the Commons of intentional wrong-doing, Walwyn does not also absolve the Assembly of the Divines. According to Walwyn the Assembly must bear the blame for this new repression. The Divines are accused of fearing the truth and of working for its suppression (Haller 65). Walwyn emphasizes the duty of the Commons as he sees it: to listen to the suggestions for the furtherance of the common good, and then to act upon the suggestions that appear in their sound judgement to be of benefit. He also anticipates Milton's argument for the free combat of good and evil, truth and falsehood, so that "errour may discover its foulnesse, and truth become more glorious by a victorious conquest after a fight in open field" (Haller 94). This similarity and others between Walwyn's tract and *Areopagitica* have in fact led some scholars to conclude that both Walwyn and Milton were influenced by each other's work:

> The close similarity of all this to the *Areopagitica's* exordium, proposition, and peroration, together with the particular parallels indicated below, leave no doubt that Milton had read and been influenced by *The Compassionate Samaritane*. Most interestingly, the revised edition of *The Samaritane* (January 5, 1645) appears in turn to have been influenced by *Areopagitica*. (Sirluck 87)

It would seem very likely for a man of Milton's interests and studious habits to have read Walwyn's work even if he was not himself engaged in thought upon the same issue. The fact that Milton was contemplating *Areopagitica*, if not already engaged in

writing it at the time Walwyn's tract was published, however, does nothing short of assure us of Milton's familiarity with *The Compassionate Samaritane*. But this is not to say that Milton's own document was shaped after Walwyn's model. A close examination of the *Areopagitica* in relation to Milton's own theories of logic and rhetoric reveals such a degree of control and calculation in the argumentation of the tract that the similarities with Walwyn's work begin to take on the appearance of coincidence rather than design.

In November of 1644, Milton's *Areopagitica* was delivered, without licence, to the English people. In this tract the events of the Reformation, of the Civil War and the tumultuous events of Milton's reassessment of key aspects of his own beliefs and of his public persecution are brought to a masterful crescendo. *Areopagitica* is at once a seemingly logical argument which, upon closer examination, reveals itself to be a study in persuasive intentional fallacies, and a deeply considered, meticulously structured masterpiece of rhetoric. Like all great literature, it not only provides aesthetic pleasure to the casual reader, but it also rewards the scrutiny of more detailed study.

Chapter Two

Milton's Illogical "Voice of Reason": the Structure and Logic of *Areopagitica*

In *Areopagitica's* opening comments John Milton requests that his audience acknowledge and obey "the voice of reason from what quarter soever it be heard speaking" (490). One would expect the document that follows this comment to be an exemplary piece of well reasoned and logical argumentation. This, however, is not the case. In his introduction to John Milton's text book on logic, the *Artis Logicae Plenior Institutio ad Petri Rami Methodum Concinnata*, Walter J. Ong makes the following comment: "The self-conscious logic that Milton's prose often advertises does not mean, however, that his prose is always in fact tightly reasoned" (Ong, Prose 199). The relative "tightness" of Milton's reasoning in *Areopagitica* may be contested on a number of grounds. The document's four principal arguments, for example, are primarily based upon the more persuasive style of inductive reasoning rather than the more rigid and objective style of deductive reasoning. Certainly, in a document against the licensing of printing and in support of tolerance for non-conformist faiths, Milton's acceptance of censorship and his intolerance of "Popery" are curious if not illogical aspects of his argument. These illogical aspects raise interesting questions about the reasoning behind the disposition of his arguments. Despite a variety and number of complex efforts to rationalize these seemingly contradictory and illogical elements of *Areopagitica*, Ong's

commentary remains the most accurate assessment of the curious aspects of Milton's address.

The following discussion will consider *Areopagitica* in terms of the principal question of logic which, as Irving M. Copi states in his *Introduction to Logic* is as follows: "does the conclusion reached follow from the premises used or assumed?" (Copi 5). While *Areopagitica* often fails to meet this basic requirement of formal reasoning, Milton's own text book on logic is testament to his thorough understanding of the discipline, and therefore to the intentional rather than inadvertent nature of the document's various digressions from logic-based argumentation.[3] *Areopagitica's* unique combination of logic and rhetoric forms part of a wholly intentional, calculated authorial strategy carefully designed to appeal to a specific audience. It is often the case that when *Areopagitica* is least logical, it is most persuasive.

Milton's plea for unlicensed printing is composed of four major arguments: that licensing was conceived by the hated "popish" establishment (and therefore that licensing is as evil as its inventors), that highly respected church authorities recommended the reading of both "good" and "bad" books (and therefore it must be beneficial to read these books), that attempts to license books will not succeed in suppressing the "scandalous, seditious and libellous" books (491), and finally, that licensing will result in the

---

[3]There is some controversy over the date of Milton's logic but most agree that it was likely written between 1648 and 1650, when Milton was teaching logic to his nephews. Although *Areopagitica* is therefore likely to have preceded the text on logic, it may be safely assumed that Milton already possessed in 1644 the vast part of the knowledge he would later display in his text.

discouragement of all learning and must therefore be avoided. Although Milton's presentation of these arguments is in fact riddled with logical fallacies and is often overtly dependent upon weaker argumentative techniques, the document consistently maintains the appearance of reason. This appearance is largely due to the structure of the argument and its accordance with classical oratorical form. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle presents his recommended format for speeches:

> These are the essential features of a speech; and it cannot in any case have more than Introduction, Statement, Argument and Epilogue. (Aristotle 200)

In following this general outline, Milton encourages a favourable reception for his address by conveying information to his readers in a predictable and orderly manner. The sense of order and the appearance of familiarity this structure affords the document provides *Areopagitica* with an authoritative tone, which is also apparent throughout each of the four sections of the speech, as each of the four follows an equally familiar and accepted internal structure. This is especially true of the introduction.

In the proem or introduction to *Areopagitica*, Milton begins by expressing the feelings evoked within him as he prepares his address to Parliament. He expresses his sympathy with others who, in similar situations, have felt doubt, hope and occasionally confidence about their endeavour. Although he also admits to these feelings, he stresses that they are in his case overshadowed by the joy he feels at the opportunity to promote his country's liberty. Milton then proceeds to point out how this opportunity to air complaints is the

highest possible good a man can expect of a commonwealth, since it is unreasonable to hope for a situation in which grievances never arise. He congratulates his audience, the "worthy Magistrates"(487), the Lords and Commons of England, who through the assistance of God were able to bring about the existing state of liberty. He continues his praise of the Lords and Commons, and pauses briefly to distinguish between praise and flattery. He then suggests that his fellow citizens will come to appreciate the real differences between the "magnanimity of a trienniall Parlament" and the "Prelates and cabin Counsellours that usurpt of late" when they observe Parliament willingly accepting criticism of a recent order (488-9). Milton proceeds to offer examples from "the old and elegant humanity of Greece" that support the custom of allowing "men who profest the study of wisdome and eloquence" to address the magistrates when they felt the state should be admonished (489). He concludes the proem or introduction by requesting that, although he may be inferior to the wise men of ancient Greece, he not be considered as inferior as his audience must be considered superior to the statesmen to whom these wise men offered their advice. Finally, Milton argues that the English Parliament's superiority to the Greek council will be obvious when the Lords and Commons demonstrate the same willingness to repeal one of their own laws as they demonstrated in repealing the misdirected laws of their predecessors.

All of these points conform to the loosely defined introduction recommended by Aristotle. They include both praise and censure, advice to take action of some sort, and finally, an appeal to the

audience (Aristotle 201). But while the formal tone and predictable subject matter suggest a carefully reasoned speech, as the above summary indicates, Milton does not rely upon carefully plotted reasoning to establish his right to speak or to set the tone of the address to follow.

Milton establishes a precedent for his address to Parliament by citing what he believes to be mutually admired examples from Greek history. During the course of this discussion, he simultaneously demonstrates his patriotism and humility and builds good-will with his audience by applauding their recent accomplishments. He is careful to create a degree of suspense by referring to an as yet unspecified "recent order," and he positions his request for reform so as to make his audience responsible for ensuring the validity of his praise:

> and how farre you excell them, be assur'd, Lords and Commons, there can no greater testimony appear, then when your prudent spirit acknowledges and obeyes the voice of reason from what quarter soever it be heard speaking; and renders ye as willing to repeal any Act of your own setting forth, as any set forth by your Predecessors. (490)

Although Milton requests that his audience heed "the voice of reason" -- the voice that provides logical arguments to support its premises -- he himself fails to provide his audience with a "logical" voice in the introduction to *Areopagitica*. His attempts to justify his own right to speak provide an illustration of this point. Rather than present well-reasoned arguments to Parliament, he chooses instead to justify his speech by pointing out that the Greek councils allowed such customs in their system of government. This approach is

especially curious since Milton was well aware that Parliament's immediate circumstances varied greatly from those faced by the Greek councils, and that Parliament had little desire to emulate the Greek practice of accepting, and indeed encouraging public criticism. The licensing order itself provides the best indication of Parliament's disposition toward public criticism. The first line of the document underscores Parliament's central objective in re-establishing control of the British press:

> divers good Orders have bin lately made by both Houses of Parliament, for suppressing the great late abuses and frequent disorders in Printing many false forged, scandalous, seditious, libellous, and unlicensed Papers, Pamphlets, and Books *to the great defamation of Religion and government.* (Sirluck Prose 797, my emphasis)

Unlike the Greeks who apparently welcomed both criticism and praise from their citizens (or at least from a select group of private citizens), the British Parliament of 1643 was not similarly disposed toward public advice. The rather precariously positioned revolutionary government had not yet achieved sufficient confidence in its own position to afford the luxury of potentially destabilizing propaganda. The licensing act itself suggests that Milton was aware of Parliament's fears of public criticism, and it leaves little doubt that the Lords and Commons would not be anxious to embrace the Greek custom advocated by Milton in his introduction. In these circumstances one might expect "the voice of reason" to provide a series of counter arguments to quell what he might safely assume to be his audience's primary objections to the form of address he is about to deliver. This, however, is not the case. Milton's appeal

circumvents the here-and-now considerations of political necessity by indirectly calling to mind the philosophical ideals of public liberty and free government that motivated the revolution. In comparing Parliament to the "ideal" Greek system of government, Milton places over twenty-two hundred years of distance between his points of comparison. This distance has the effect of blurring the vast differences between the two cultures and of considerably reducing the possibility of raising objections to this reasoning in the readers' minds. Milton evidently hopes that by approaching his justification in this manner he will be able to convince his readers of the plausibility and logic of the Greek practice without causing these readers to recall the many objections to such practices that currently rest in their own minds. By dealing with issues in this manner, Milton strays far from the "voice of reason" advocated in the opening lines. It may be argued that the differences between Milton's two points of comparison are so vast that they almost render the comparison logically invalid.

In the next section of the speech, the statement or proposition, Milton continues the line of discussion commenced in his introduction. Once again the voice of reason is overcome by a less logical but more persuasive voice:

> If ye be thus resolv'd, as it were injury to thinke ye were not, I know not what should withhold me from presenting ye with a fit instance wherein to shew both that love of truth which ye eminently professe, and that uprightnesse of your judgement which is not wont to be partiall to your selves; by judging over again that Order which ye have ordain'd *to regulate Printing. That no Book, pamphlet, or paper shall be henceforth Printed, unlesse the same be first*

> *approv'd and licenc't by such*, or at least one of such as shall be thereto appointed. (490-1)

In this case Milton clearly abuses the principles of logical reasoning and commits the fallacy of the circumstantial *argumentum ad hominem*. Rather than present reasons why this order merits reconsideration, or even a broad statement regarding the value of reconsideration as a general practice, Milton directs his appeal to his audience and insists that their beliefs and circumstances, their professed "love of truth" and "uprightnesse of judgement," necessitate agreement with his demand. Irving M. Copi defines the *argumentum ad hominem* in the following manner:

> *argumentum ad hominem*, the "circumstantial" variety, pertains to the relationship between a person's beliefs and his circumstances. Where two people are disputing, one may ignore the question of whether his own view is true or false and seek instead to prove that his opponent ought to accept it because of that opponent's special circumstances. Thus if one's adversary is a clergyman, one may argue that a certain proposition must be accepted because its denial is incompatible with the Scriptures. This is not to prove it true, but to urge its acceptance by that particular individual because of his special circumstances. (Copi 89-90)

Parliament's love of truth and uprightness of judgement do not in themselves logically lead to the conclusion that the printing order must be reconsidered. It is apparent that in Milton's own opinion the Parliament's professed love of both truth and justice should result in the reconsideration of this order, but as Copi points out, arguments that rely upon the *argumentum ad hominem* do not provide sufficient justification for their conclusions:

> Arguments such as these are not really to the point; they do not present good grounds for the truth of their conclusions

> but are intended only to win assent to the conclusion from one's opponent because of the opponent's special circumstances. This they frequently do; they are often very persuasive. (Copi 90)

Once again Milton has subordinated the reason of his argument to the persuasiveness of its effect. Of course, it must also be remembered that the central discussion of *Areopagitica* is dedicated to the "reasons" behind Milton's conclusion that the order must be reconsidered. By avoiding any real discussion of the issues at this point, Milton is able to accomplish two key objectives: he avoids any risk of alienating his audience by summarizing his views before they can be fully supported, and he creates another opportunity to cultivate a positive rapport with this audience by presenting an implied compliment of their moral character.

Both the introduction to *Areopagitica* and the statement that follows are indicative of Milton's approach to the body of the text -- the four principal arguments that form the third section of the address. This third section begins with a formal partition, or statement that separates and orders for the reader the issues to be covered in the body of the document:

> I shall now attend with such a Homily, as shall lay before ye, first the inventors of it to bee those whom ye will be loath to own; next what is to be thought in generall of reading, what ever sort the Books be; and that this Order avails nothing to the suppressing of scandalous, seditious, and libellous Books, which were mainly intended to be supprest. Last, that it will be primely to the discouragement of all learning, and the stop of Truth, not only by disexcercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindring and cropping the discovery that might bee yet further made both in religious and civill Wisdome. (491-2)

At the conclusion of this outline, Milton embarks upon a brief discussion of the nature of books. This discussion begins with the concession that while licensing books before they are published is wrong, the "potency" of books necessitates that a "vigilant eye how Bookes demeane themselves, as well as men" must be maintained (492). In essence, he argues that books may not be licensed before they are printed, but allows that if these books are proven to be bad they may be censored afterwards. This provision is, however, swiftly qualified. Milton asserts that books preserve the living intellect of the people who wrote them and that therefore "hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye" (492). He closes this brief discussion with a caution that all men be wary of how they treat books, "the living labours of publick men" (493).

This brief discussion is followed by the first of the four issues outlined in the partition. This first issue, which describes the genesis of licensing and its loathsome inventors, is best described as a narrative. In this section Milton examines the Greek, Roman and early Christian civilizations and points out how they avoided licensing while still preserving the state from "blasphemous and Atheisticall, or Libellous" books (494). He then contrasts these periods of liberty and relative tolerance with the licensing and other restrictions brought in by the Roman Catholic popes. As Wilber Gilman points out, a narrative of this sort does not usually form part of a document like *Areopagitica*, but in this case Milton has made the narrative an integral part of his argument:

> Ordinarily a narration does not form a part of a deliberative address for the reason that a narration deals with the past, whereas a deliberative address deals with the future. If, however, the experience of the past is set forth as a basis for deciding on the course of future action, then such an account closely approximates a narration. Milton's first main contention, in a similar manner, serves the function of a narration. He traces the experience of the civilized world with the policy of censorship in order to convince Parliament that censorship was sponsored by the unenlightened and disapproved by the wise. Hence, this historical survey accomplishes the two-fold purpose of presenting past experience as a guide in settling England's problem of licensing, and of supporting the proposition that Parliament should reconsider its recent order. (Gilman 14)

As Gilman points out, Milton's very selective history of licensing is carefully crafted to evoke a specific reaction from his audience. Once again Milton has placed the emphasis of his writing on the persuasive rather than the logical aspects of his arguments.

The first objection which must be raised against the particular line of argumentation used in this first portion of *Areopagitica* is that, in meeting his own objective of proving that "the inventors of it . . . [licensing] bee those whom ye will be loath to own"(491), Milton once again reduces his discussion to the level of logical fallacy -- in this case the fallacy of the *argumentum ad hominem*. In this instance he once again offends against reason by directing his attack "to the man" -- in this case the inventors of licensing -- rather than to the issue of licensing itself. Copi defines the abusive *ad hominem* in the following manner:

> instead of trying to disprove the truth of what is asserted, one attacks the person who made the assertion. Thus it may be argued that Bacon's philosophy is untrustworthy because he was removed from his chancellorship for dishonesty.

> This argument is fallacious, because the personal character of a person is logically irrelevant to the truth or falsehood of what that person says or the correctness or incorrectness of that person's argument. . . . This kind of argument is sometimes said to commit the "Genetic Fallacy," because it attacks the source or genesis of the opposing position rather than that position itself. (Copi 89)

Copi explains that this type of argument succeeds when its audience is persuaded through "the psychological process of transference" (89). When transference has occurred, the audience allows the negative feelings evoked towards the speaker to distort and taint the argument this speaker puts forth. In this case Milton hopes that by associating licensing with the despised Roman Catholic Church he may create within the members of Parliament a distaste for their own form of licensing.

While Milton unapologetically sustains this obviously precarious line of argument over the course of several pages, he does pause to refute the obvious question that arises from his discussion: "What though the Inventors were bad, the thing for all that may be good?"(507). Milton's response to his own question is intriguing. He answers himself with two carefully framed, logically sound syllogisms, or deductive arguments in which the conclusion may be inferred from two preceding premises (Copi 198). The syllogism is the basic unit of logical discussion and is governed by specific rules of structure. The following example is described by Copi as a standard-form syllogism:

> No heroes are cowards.
> Some soldiers are cowards.
> Therefore some soldiers are not heroes. (Copi 199)

In Milton's case the syllogisms are complicated by the fact that some of the premises are implied and are therefore not restated before the conclusion:

> if that thing [the practice of licensing] be no such deep invention, but obvious, and easie for any man to light on, and yet best and wisest Commonwealths through all ages, and occasions have forborne to use it, and falsest seducers, and oppressors of men were the first who tooke it up, and to no other purpose but to obstruct and hinder the first approach of Reformation; I am of those who beleeve, it will be a harder alchymy then *Lullius* ever knew, to sublimat any good use out of such an invention. (507)

This portion of text may be broken into two basic arguments. The first is as follows:

> Good people only forbear bad things
> Good (the best and wisest) people forbear licensing
> Hence, licensing is a bad thing

The second syllogism is constructed in the following manner:

> False seducers and oppressors are bad people
> The inventors of licensing are false seducers and oppressors
> Hence, licensers are bad people

In his formal study of the logic and rhetoric of *Areopagitica*, Gilman notes that in the first of these two counter-syllogisms Milton "denies the consequent" of his query (ie: that licensing "for all that may be good"), and in the second, "he affirms the antecedent" of his query (ie: that the "Inventors were bad") (Gilman 24). Although the structure and composition of Milton's argument is correct, it is important to note that the key premises are supported by misleading evidence. Milton tells his readers that the wisest Commonwealths rejected licensing and that those who embraced the

practice were "falsest seducers" and "Oppressors," and he supports this claim with a very selective account of the history of licensing. As Ernest Sirluck and other scholars have argued, however, this claim overlooks substantial evidence that contradicts Milton's sweeping statements:

> in general he [Milton] gives the impression that licensing is a thoroughly un-English policy, recently imported by "apishly Romanizing" bishops and perfected only in 1637 (the date of the Star Chamber decree to which he refers). It is remarkable how generally this view has been accepted, for it is widely at variance with the facts. One thing may be said in its defense: the enforcement of licensing in England had been very uneven, and there were considerable periods during which the regulations were largely ignored, so that the rigourous and determined attempt of 1637 to secure universal compliance might well have struck men as something new. But the policy of licensing was far from new, and had been employed not only by Charles and Laud but by kings and churchmen whom Milton thought true Protestant reformers. (Sirluck 158)

Thus not all of the best and wisest commonwealths rejected licensing, and not all who practised licensing can be described as false seducers and oppressors. Although both Sirluck and Gilman dismiss Milton's misrepresentation of the facts very swiftly by commenting that he is "not basically inaccurate" (Sirluck 164), or by accepting his approach as justifiable "for the sake of its argumentative force"(Gilman 14), the importance of Milton's actions here must be acknowledged if an accurate assessment of the document's logic is to be achieved. Surprisingly, Gilman argues that "there is no reason to suspect Milton of deliberately warping the argument" (14) despite the fact that Milton chooses to ignore all events that contradict his conclusions. In light of the evidence, however, Gilman's statement must be

considered both naïve and overly generous. The only way Milton may be cleared of responsibility for having deliberately warped his argument is if it can be proven that he was very poorly informed about his topic, in which case he would be guilty of irresponsibility rather than of a deliberate effort to deceive. Even if such an assumption of ignorance did not run counter to everything that is known about John Milton, the level of knowledge about the licensing issue demonstrated by the text itself effectively eliminates all debate on this question. The most likely explanation for Milton's selective representation of the facts is that Milton made a conscious decision to sacrifice the factual accuracy of his account in order to enhance its persuasive powers.[4]

In addition to the charges of fallacious reasoning and deliberate misrepresentation of evidence that must be raised against Milton's first argument, one final point should be noted. The extended analogy between the manner in which the Greeks handled the licensing issue and the manner in which the English are currently managing this same concern also fails under the scrutiny of formal

---

[4]Paul M. Dowling in his article "Milton's Use (or Abuse) of History in *Areopagitica*" provides a very different but very interesting justification for Milton's selective representation of history. Dowling suggests that in omitting all discussion of facts and events that contradict his argument Milton is merely following an approach to historiography "in something akin to the Herodotean tradition"(Dowling 31). Dowling explains that in this tradition "it is not sufficient to determine whether the historian has gotten his facts right. Rather, one must view the particulars (whether false or true) as suggesting 'meaning'"(Dowling 31). While there can be no doubt that Milton was indeed attempting to convey "meaning" through his selective views of history, it must also be remembered that his history is framed in the larger context of a "reasonable" argument against licensing, and, therefore, that it carries a strong responsibility for accuracy. Even if it could be demonstrated that Milton was in fact applying the Herodotean approach to history in *Areopagitica*, this would still not excuse him from charges of deliberately misleading his readers.

logic. It has already been noted that the over twelve hundred years separating the two civilizations effectively render the comparison logically invalid by vastly reducing the shared circumstances required to give the argument strength. Because this discussion centres on the licensing of printing, the span of time is especially important since the presses themselves did not exist in Greece at the time Milton discusses. The Greeks were concerned about the dissemination of ideas and the concepts of licensing and censorship; however, because they lacked all means of quickly disseminating vast amounts of information to large numbers of citizens, these issues remained of more philosophical than practical concern to them. With the invention of the printing press and moveable type, the scope and importance of these ideas grew exponentially. Thus, the comparison of problems faced by the Parliament of 1644 with those of the Greek Council of the 300's possesses a very low degree of logical validity. Once again it is evident that, despite Milton's claims about the reason and logic of his argument, this first topic of discussion is not handled in an objective and logical manner.

Following the narration of the history of licensing, Milton proceeds to his second major argument: the value of reading both good and bad books. In this section of his "proof" or discussion, Milton begins by citing biblical authorities like Saint Paul, Moses and Daniel, and by telling how these men of great wisdom and faith justified their reading of both good and bad books. This first portion of the argument is concluded with the triumphant vindication of reading that was allegedly recited in a dream to Dionysius Alexandrinus, Bishop of Alexandria from 247-265:

> Read any books what ever come to thy hands, for thou art sufficient both to judge aright, and to examine each matter. (511)

The style of argument used throughout this section of *Areopagitica* is referred to as the *argumentum ad verecundiam*, or the appeal to authority. Although this style of argument often violates the principles of logical argument, in this case it is used in both a valid and effective manner. Milton's emphasis on the opinion of biblical authorities does not constitute a logical fallacy because the authorities mentioned are considered to be experts on the topic under discussion. As Copi notes, as long as legitimate authorities are cited in the *argumentum ad verecundiam* this form of argument is both logically valid and very persuasive:

> In attempting to make up one's mind on a difficult and complicated question, one may seek to be guided by the judgement of a genuine, acknowledged expert who can be expected to have studied the matter thoroughly. One may argue that such and such a conclusion is correct because it is the best judgement of such an expert authority. This method of argument is in many cases perfectly legitimate, for the reference to an admitted authority in the special field of that authority's competence may carry great weight and constitute relevant evidence. (Copi 94-95)

It must be acknowledged, however, that while this argument is logically valid, it merely establishes the probability that the premise is correct; it does not offer proof. By approaching his question in this way, Milton is able to use the strongest weapon at his disposal, the Bible, to substantiate his case without entering into the very subjective debate of chapters and verses. Milton admits that the question of whether or not reading of the Egyptians, Caldeans and

Greeks should be allowed was "sometimes controverted among the Primitive Doctors"(508), but he refrains from adding yet another exegesis of relevant passages to the existing collection and chooses instead to concentrate on more objective material like the fact that Paul thought it "no defilement to insert into holy Scripture the sentences of three Greek poets" (508). In this way Milton is able to summon the strength of a biblically based argument without entering into a biblical debate. By saying that Moses, Daniel and Paul felt reading widely was a good practice Milton technically does not say that God ordained the practice, but he makes it tempting for his reader to infer this conclusion.

From here, *Areopagitica* moves into a discussion of the inseparability of good and evil in all worldly things, and finally, toward the conclusion that evil is actually necessary to the discernment of good, and therefore that virtue must be won by trial. This argument eventually returns the discussion to the central concern of *Areopagitica* as Milton concludes that, since good must be tried against evil, the publishing of English tractates should be allowed to proceed unlicensed and otherwise unencumbered because the tractates have been proven reliable sources of both "good" and "evil" reasoning on a variety of important issues:

> Since therefore the knowledge and survay of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human vertue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with lesse danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity then by reading all manner of tractats, and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read. (516-7)

It is interesting to note that throughout this entire discussion of the very complex nature of good and evil Milton refrains from philosophical debate and presents his conclusions in the form of axioms:

> Good and evill *we know* in the field of this World grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good *is so involv'd and interwoven* with the knowledge of evill, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discern'd, that those confused seeds which were impos'd on *Psyche* as an incessant labour to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixt. (514, emphasis my own)

Once again Milton has subordinated the "voice of reason" in *Areopagitica* to its persuasive voice. The very fact that the church and state have debated the relative merits and dangers of reading "bad" or pagan material strongly suggests that the nature of good and evil has not been established to the satisfaction of all involved. While a sound philosophical proof would require a complete examination of such a fundamental principle of Milton's larger argument, Milton realizes that such a proof would distract his readers from his immediate concern and thereby impede his effort to persuade them. But while the philosophic proof may be absent, this portion of *Areopagitica* is endowed with exceptional rhetorical power. The conviction of Milton's own belief in the trial of virtue is conveyed to his readers in some of *Areopagitica's* finest and most memorable prose. His exhortations against the "fugitive and cloister'd vertue" and for the continuous trial and testing of Christian obedience echo a similar theme in *Comus* and anticipate his sublime exploration of this topic in *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* (515). Through the power and beauty of his

language, Milton is able to draw attention away from the more controversial aspects of his argument and focus it on the most convincing.

Having exhausted his list of the benefits to be accrued from the trial of virtue through the reading of "bad" books, Milton then refutes three counter-arguments concerning the possible harm that may result from reading these books. In the first two cases he responds by affirming the fear raised in the counter-argument while simultaneously defusing the anticipated solution. In the first case he examines the question of whether these books will cause the "infection" to spread (517). To this concern Milton answers that if infection is to be curtailed, all books, even the Holy Bible, must be removed since even the Bible "oftimes relates blasphemy not nicely"(517). This response indirectly affirms the fears of his imaginary opposition while also leaving them helpless to employ the most logical solution of ridding the "cause" of the infection.

This same technique is applied again in the second argument. The second refutation confronts the concern that the infection spread by books is more "doubtfull and dangerous to the learned, then to the ignorant; and yet those books must be permitted untoucht by the licencer" (519). This time Milton goes on at some length stating the justifications for this fear, yet he concludes with a comprehensive statement concerning the futility of all efforts to address this issue through licensing:

> Seeing therefore that those books, & those in great abundance which are likeliest to taint both life and doctrine, cannot be suppresst without the fall of learning, and of all

> ability in disputation, and that these books of either sort are most and soonest catching to the learned, from whom to the common people what ever is hereticall or dissolute may quickly be convey'd, and that evill manners are as perfectly learnt without books a thousand other ways which cannot be stopt, and evill doctrine not with books can propagate, except a teacher guide, which he might also doe without writing, and so beyond prohibiting, I am not able to unfold, how this cautelous enterprise of licensing can be exempted from the number of vain and impossible attempts. (520)

This argument about the futility of licensing foreshadows the third major discussion in *Areopagitica*, but before this argument is reached, Milton pauses briefly to deal with the third objection which may be raised against the reading of "bad" books.

> "Tis next alleg'd we must not expose our selves to temptations without necessity, and next to that, not imploy our time in vain things." (521)

The response to this charge is brief. Milton calls upon "grounds already laid" and concludes that "to all men such books are not temptations, nor vanities; but usefull drugs and materialls wherewith to temper and compose effective and strong med'cins, which mans life cannot want" (521).

From here Milton's discussion moves into the third issue laid out in the formal partition. Before addressing this issue, however, he pauses once again -- this time to review the progress of his argument to this point. He reminds his audience of the origins of licensing, and that the wisest men scorned its use. Finally he proceeds to examine what is perhaps the most famous argument in favour of licensing: Plato's discussion in *The Republic*. Milton begins by pointing out how Plato broke his own rules regarding licensing, and that he did so because he recognized the limitations of such action outside of the

utopian republic for which it was designed. This discussion finally leads Milton to his third major argument: the futility of licensing as a means of rectifying man's behaviour.

This argument begins with the assertion that if the evil in books is to be regulated, all other forms of evil or temptation must also be regulated. Because the principle of the inseparability of good and evil has already been established, Milton is able swiftly to make apparent to his readers the futility of all efforts to eradicate evil. Milton points to "our first parent," Adam, and suggests that a choice similar to that faced by Adam must be experienced by all Christians in order that they may fulfil the requirement for willing obedience to God. This theme, which later forms a central part of *Paradise Lost* and which was clarified in Milton's own mind during the writing of the divorce tracts, derives from the idea that God granted Adam reason so that he might obey this inner guide and thereby survive in a world of abundance through the practice of temperance. Milton proceeds from this point to argue that the small risk presented by books must be overlooked in light of the great good they can accomplish. He concludes this third section of *Areopagitica* by pointing out the extraordinary difficulties Parliament would encounter in attempting to find a licenser worthy of confronting the great challenges presented by licensing, and he offers these difficulties as yet more proof that the concept of licensing should be abandoned.

The style of argumentation used in this section of the document marks a slight departure from the techniques employed to this point. Although Milton still does not rely upon the mathematical precision

of syllogistic reasoning, he does ensure that his premises are well argued and soundly supported by examples and analogies. The most fascinating aspect of this argument is, however, the shift that occurs in the terms of debate part way through the discussion. Milton begins by addressing the question of whether licensing will be effective "to the end for which it was fram'd"(521) -- which according to the licensing act itself is to end "the disturbance of the peace of the Church and State" that has been caused by the printing of "divers libellous, seditious, and mutinous bookes"(Sirluck 793) -- and he ends the discussion with the conclusion that licensing will be ineffective because it will never be able to rid the world of evil. In the midst of the argument, Milton elevates the concerns of his discussion above the level of political necessity in which the order was conceived, and into a more abstract, and in this case, more defensible level of argumentation. The result of this switch is that although the reasoning of the arguments is enhanced, these arguments are still logically irrelevant since they do not address the premise they are designed to support. Once again Milton's intention is clear. He intends that his arguments proving the inability of licensing to prevent evil should be converted into a general argument against licensing in his readers' minds.

In the fourth and final section of *Areopagitica*, Milton presents the argument that licensing will discourage learning and stop truth by blunting the existing abilities of discernment and by impeding the further refinement of these same abilities. In this portion of the address Milton returns to his earlier discussion of licensers and the difficulties that will be faced by Parliament in properly choosing

people for this job. He extends this discussion to the conclusion that real scholars will not be kept under the rule of an inferior, and hence that, under such a system, stupidity will ultimately become the only tolerable way of life.

Milton then departs from the subject of licensers to begin both a denunciation of all attempts to "monopolize" truth, and a proclamation of support for the English people and their ability to distinguish between good and evil without the condescending guidance of a licenser. At this point Milton discusses his experiences abroad and mentions how the learned acquaintances he encountered on this trip revered England as a free nation. He concludes his travel narrative with a warning: should Parliament become the silencers of reading, they will be considered by all to be no better than the prelates who exercised similar tyrannies before them. Throughout this section Milton makes use of emotively charged language to control his audience's reception of his material. Words like "monopoly" are employed in order to align licensing subtly with the most hated aspects of the previous regime. In the concluding sentence of this discussion, the hitherto implied comparison between Britain's old and new regimes is made explicit: the presbyters will be considered no better than the loathed prelates if they persist with their tyrannous licensing act.

Next, it is suggested that instead of suppressing schisms, licensing actually encourages their existence by moving the dissenters underground and into private homes rather than into public auditoriums where the heresy might be heard and properly confuted. Milton insists that, even if licensing were to be effective, it

would result in manifest harm since many men would be likely to resign their consciences and religious thoughts to the charge of others in order to avoid risk of dissent and heresy. Milton now concludes his argument with a plea that Parliament ensure the continued pursuit of truth, and that the fountains of truth be prohibited from stagnating through the oppression of men's minds. He appeals to his readers' patriotic feelings by presenting them with a picture of England as the glorious "mansion house of liberty" that is prepared to become the example of an ideal Godly and free nation to the rest of the world (554). He calls upon the biblical image of Samson to characterize England as "a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks"(558), and begs Parliament to reconsider its decision to put such fetters on the "flowery crop of knowlege" that they must be credited with having begun.

This fourth and final section of *Areopagitica* is by far the best reasoned of the four. While it does not adopt a syllogistic style, it does argue convincingly without a significant reliance upon fallacy. The one small concession to this general rule occurs with Milton's diction. His language throughout this section is particularly charged with sentiment and memory. The extent to which these emotions are called upon may fairly constitute the fallacy of *argumentum ad populum* -- the emotional appeal to an audience in which the energies expended by the author to raise emotion and enthusiasm for his point of view rival, if not outweigh, the energies expended to provide good evidence for this point of view (Copi 93).

The last formal division of *Areopagitica* that deserves examination is the epilogue. In this concluding section Milton renews his plea that Parliament not squelch the renewed learning and freedom that had been so long repressed under the previous regime. He argues that this repression cannot be accomplished without a firm decision on behalf of Parliament to return to the tyranny and suppression from which this government so recently freed England. A remembrance of Lord Brooke, the parliamentary hero who propounded the need for tolerance and who died in the war of 1643, is also mentioned by Milton. Milton also states his own plea for tolerance, at least tolerance for everything but "Popery, and open superstition" which he accuses of extirpating all other religions (565). He concludes his document with the request that Parliament return to the initial order regarding printing wherein it was requested only that the author's and publisher's names be registered. He excuses Parliament for having erred in issuing the licensing order and blames this error on the false council and fraud of those seeking patents and monopolies in the trade of book-selling. In the closing lines he reiterates his initial statement that every government, both good and bad alike, must err, but pleads with the Lords and Commons to demonstrate their virtue by redressing "willingly and speedily what hath been err'd" and to claim thereby the cherished virtue "whereof none can participat but greatest and wisest men"(570).

This epilogue is perfectly suited to the document it is intended to close. As is the case with the preceding segments of *Areopagitica*, the epilogue conforms to classical oratory form and specifically to the outline advocated by Aristotle in *Rhetoric*.

> The epilogue has four parts. You must (1) make the audience well-disposed towards yourself and ill-disposed towards your opponent, (2) magnify or minimize the leading facts, (3) excite the required state of emotion in your hearers, and (4) refresh their memories. (Aristotle 214)

While Milton does not choose to be held to the exact order advocated by Aristotle, he does bring in all of the basic points to ensure an effective close to his argument. As is the case with the rest of *Areopagitica*, the heavy emphasis on persuasive rather than logical argumentation is also evident here. The epilogue does not contain a well ordered summary of previously supported arguments, but instead it relies upon emotion-charged rhetoric both to condemn the despised licensing order, and yet praise and excuse the Parliament that ordained the order. Throughout this section, as throughout the foregoing sections of *Areopagitica*, the reader is conscious of a politically astute narrator who willingly employs language and thought for practical as well as esoteric purposes by putting aside scholarly pride and fitting the discussion to suit his audience.

While the various fallacies and departures from formal reasoning are for the most part well disguised throughout *Areopagitica*, one apparent contradiction has received much attention and debate: Milton's exclusion of "popery" from his general prescription for tolerance.

In his article "'The Surest Suppressing': Writer and Censor in Milton's *Areopagitica*," Henry S. Limouze summarizes the controversy:

> At one point Milton writes eloquently of the use to be made of bad books, yet at another he hastily excepts "tolerated

> Popery" and ideas "impious or evil absolutely" from the general dispensation. The tract celebrates freedom at the same time it attacks immorality. The questions that arise have been asked by some of Milton's best students: how do we reconcile the apparent inconsistency? where is the tract's vital center? (Limouze 103)

Limouze points out that the answers to these questions have been as varied as they have been numerous. They range from the valiant efforts of critics like Joseph A. Wittreich, Jr. who attempts to reconcile the contradictions by assigning an ironic reading to the anti-tolerationist sections, to Willmoore Kendall who argues that "it is high time" that Milton's *Areopagitica* be moved across "the line that divides the 'pro' literature from the 'anti' -- to take its rightful place among the political treatises we have all been brought up to deplore and avoid" (Kendall 440). The process by which *Areopagitca* must be examined to determine the logic of its arguments provides a useful means of addressing this controversy.

If Milton is assumed to have been "logical" in his discussion of this controversial point, any confusion over his intent should be clarified by the evidence and arguments he presents to support his point. Of course the foregoing assessment of *Areopagitica* has underscored the document's surprising lack of formal logic; however, if logic is, in this instance, understood in the more general sense of "well argued," the process will be of value. It becomes quickly evident that the exhortations against tolerance, which arise at various intervals in the text, are comparatively unsupported and unexplained; it also becomes apparent that the more numerous discussions of tolerance are very well explained and comparatively well supported by evidence and amplification. The conclusion to this

assessment, however, is not that Milton only meant to be tolerant and that the bursts of intolerance were mere oversights or afterthoughts; rather, that Milton intends these exhortations to play a key role in his argument: they are intended as boundaries or limits within which the policies of tolerance are to be exercised. The discussion surrounding the comment against "tolerated popery" is a case in point. Milton renews his plea for tolerance as follows:

> How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief strong hold of our hypocrisie to be ever judging one another. I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our necks; the ghost of a linnen decency yet haunts us. (563-4)

This discussion in favour of tolerance continues until the following brief qualifier is made:

> Yet if all cannot be of one mind, as who looks they should be? this doubtles is more wholsome, more prudent, and more Christian that many be tolerated, rather then all compell'd. *I mean not tolerated Popery, and open superstition, which as it extirpats all religions and civill supremacies, so it self should be extirpat, provided first that all charitable and compassionat means be us'd to win and regain the weak and the misled: that also which is impious or evil absolutely either against faith or maners no law can possibly permit, that intends not to unlaw it self.* (565 my emphasis)

Following this comment, the call for tolerance is once again renewed.

The efforts of Kendall and scholars like him who attempt to measure John Milton against the secular, liberal yardstick later established by J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*, are inevitably disappointed because they miss the central, and defining thesis of Milton's work. Although Milton demonstrates in *Areopagitica* the degree to which

he is willing to accommodate his own thought process to a form which will persuade his readers, he also demonstrates his refusal to compromise his values and beliefs in order to win favour or approval. Throughout his writing Milton maintains an unflinching dedication to the pursuit of "truth" and to the principle of obedience whereby this truth is turned to the perfect service of God. Freedom for Milton is freedom to serve God in what ever manner God sees fit to request of each of his creatures. This freedom must be protected at all costs. As Limouze points out, this freedom demands both tolerance to hear and assess other views and the inner discipline to follow what the individual heart knows to be correct:

> Milton's ideal state is a Christian brotherhood formed from within; the solitary communion of the author and truth, when unhindered by restriction, is consummated in a growth outward which touches and animates the commonwealth. The act of an individual, the discovery and proliferation of truth, is at the center of *Areopagitica*. (Limouze 113)

In this context Milton's intolerance for "popery" becomes clear: all is to be tolerated with the exception of intolerance itself. To the degree that the Roman Catholic Church, Archbishop Laud and others who have practised "Popery" have proven themselves to be the embodiment of suppression and intolerance, these groups must themselves be exempt from toleration. Thus, Milton's plea for tolerance is strengthened rather than weakened by the apparent contradictions embodied within the text. His exceptions to the general rule of tolerance are made to protect the policy of tolerance itself, and are therefore completely in keeping with the philosophy and beliefs propounded in the remainder of the document.

In *Areopagitica* Milton presents an orderly and systematic denunciation of the Licensing Order of 1643. Although the document bears the power and authority of a tightly reasoned argument, a close examination of the prose reveals the great degree to which Milton's style is at variance with the principles of formal logic. But this variance is far from accidental. Throughout *Areopagitica* Milton is obviously conscious of both the content of his discussion and the effect this content will have upon his audience. His decision to refrain from the use of a formal, deductive style of reasoning may be viewed as a conscious effort to ensure that his own "voice of reason" is not mired in the philosophic depths of formal logic, but rather empowered with the persuasive force of rhetoric.

Chapter Three

The Open Palm: the Rhetoric of *Areopagitica*

Areopagitica may not be a "reasonable" or logically argued plea for unlicensed printing, but what it lacks in logic and reason it more than makes up in rhetoric. As James Holly Hanford observes in *A Milton Handbook*, if, as Milton suggests, he only had the use of his left hand in writing *Areopagitica* and the other prose tracts, this left hand "was a powerful one"(68). *Areopagitica* boasts a very mature and controlled style: its tone modulates throughout the work in accordance with the subject matter, and its numerous images serve to reiterate the contention argued throughout the speech that unlicensed printing is required if the ideals of Christian liberty and truth are to be attained.

Although modern usage has made "rhetoric" a rather pejorative term, the ancient and Renaissance traditions from which Milton styled his rhetoric were both venerable and rigorous. As Wilbur Howell points out in his study of Renaissance rhetoric and logic, rhetoric was regarded as a theory of communication between the learned speaker or writer and his lay audience (Howell 4). The ancient traditions and regulations for both the persuasive "open palm" appeals of *eloquentia*, or rhetoric, and the tightly reasoned "closed fist" appeals of *logica*, or logic, were firmly established by the early Greek masters and highly respected by Renaissance

writers.[5] In *Areopagitica* Milton observes the classical conventions for deliberative speeches that are outlined by Aristotle, but which are also advocated by Cicero and Quintilian who exerted a more immediate influence on Milton.[6] Among these conventions is the requirement for the author to include each of the three basic means of persuasion: *ethos*, or an appealing portrayal of the speaker's character, *pathos*, or an appeal to the audience's emotions, and finally, *logos*, or an appeal based upon argumentative proof.[7] Milton's use of argumentative proof was examined in the preceding discussion of *Areopagitica's* logic. This discussion will focus on Milton's rhetoric, and on how, through his masterful combination of both rhetorical and literary skill, Milton achieves a document so rich with detail that it changes what is ostensibly a reasonable argument presented for Parliament's judgement into a persuasive tour-de-force that defies objective assessment.

In his pioneer study entitled *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan discusses the power and influence achieved by detail-rich communication and he describes the difference between what he calls "hot" and "cool" media. Although these terms and concepts are obviously far removed from any Milton himself may have

---

[5]Wilbur Howell notes that the metaphor of the "open palm" of rhetoric and the "closed fist" of logic were established by Zeno and carried on by both Cicero and Quintilian. See *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700*, page 4.

[6]Cicero's influence on Milton's rhetoric is discussed by Walter J. Ong in his "Introduction to Milton's Logic" in *The Complete Prose of John Milton*, volume VIII. Ernest Sirluck notes Milton's indebtedness to Quintilian on page 170 of his chapter "Milton's Pamphlets" in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*.

[7] For a brief synopsis of Aristotle's three types of persuasion see "rhetoric and poetics" on page 231 of *The Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms*, edited by Alex Preminger. For a more complete discussion, see *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*, edited and annotated by Lane Cooper.

considered, they do provide valuable insight into the effect Milton tries to achieve with *Areopagitica* :

> There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like a telephone, or a hot medium like the movie from a cool one like TV. A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in "high definition." High definition is the state of being well filled with data. A photograph is, visually, "high definition." A cartoon is "low definition," simply because very little visual information is provided. Telephone is a cool medium, or one of low definition, because the ear is given a meagre amount of information. *And speech is a cool medium of low definition, because so little is given and so much has to be filled in by the listener.* On the other hand, hot media do not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the audience. Hot media are, therefore, low in participation, and cool media are high in participation or completion by the audience. Naturally, therefore, a hot medium like radio has very different effects on the user from a cool medium like the telephone. (McLuhan 36, emphasis my own)

Areopagitica is written in the form of a speech, which, as McLuhan points out, is considered a "cool" medium because of the participation it demands of its audience in order to fill in the scant detail provided by the single sound of the orator's voice. Although it is written as a speech, as Merrit Hughes points out in his introduction to the text, "Milton had no more intention of delivering it [*Areopagitica*] in person that Isocrates had of public delivery of the speech whose title Milton adopted" (Hughes 716). In this case *Areopagitica* must be assessed as a printed rather than a spoken argument, and it must therefore be considered a hot rather than a cool medium:

> A cool medium like hieroglyphic or ideogrammic written characters has very different effects from the hot and explosive medium of the phonetic alphabet. The alphabet,

> when pushed to a high degree of abstract visual intensity, became typography. The printed word with its specialist intensity, burst the bonds of medieval corporate guilds and monasteries, creating extreme individualist patterns of enterprise and monopoly. But the typical reversal occurred when extremes of monopoly brought back the corporation, with its impersonal empire over many lives. The hotting-up of the medium of writing to repeatable print intensity led to nationalism and the religious wars of the sixteenth century. (McLuhan 36-37)

It is important to remember that McLuhan is not discussing the content of the medium here, but rather the inherent effect of the medium itself. He concludes that the hotter a given medium is -- the more detail and volume of information it pours into one of its audience's senses -- the less opportunity the audience will have to participate, and hence the greater the opportunity the writer will have to control his audience's reactions. In *Areopagitica* Milton's desire to control his audience can be witnessed not only in his choice of medium (he chooses a written address, which allows his audience to span far beyond the bounds of the House of Commons and further, allows this audience to re-read and slowly absorb the information he provides, rather than a speech that will only be heard once, and even then amid the inevitable distractions), but also in his approach to the content, in which he states and restates his case both overtly and through the use of more subliminal literary techniques. Milton ensures that his content as well as his medium is "high definition" by conveying a large volume of information to the reader. While the reader's eyes are subconsciously and involuntarily "hotted up" by the print medium, Milton seems to be trying similarly to influence his reader's mind by filling his text with information designed to create

a certain mood and to influence his reader by appealing to intuition and emotion rather than to the more conscious and discerning faculties of logic and reason. This information is organized so as to address each of the three types of persuasion advocated by both Aristotle and Cicero.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of *Areopagitica* is the way in which the author creates and presents his narrator, and in doing so, meets his requirement for an appeal to *ethos*. In accordance with Aristotle's requirement that the speaker present an appealing portrayal of himself, Milton ensures that his narrator is endowed with the three characteristics which he expects are of most importance (and therefore of most persuasive influence) to this audience. The narrator is learned, patriotic and Christian. In his discussion of *Areopagitica* in *The politic of Milton's Prose Style*, Keith W. Stavely observes how the style of *Areopagitica* surpasses the style developed throughout Milton's earlier tracts, and he points out how this progression is particularly evident in Milton's persona:

> In the ensuing oration, the rhetorical methods we have seen developing through Milton's earlier work all come to fruition. Argumentative vigour becomes inseparable from imaginative vitality, and emotional appeals achieve a new range and urbanity. The agile voice of the Apology, intellectually and imaginatively disciplined by the experience of the first three divorce tracts, becomes a humanly appealing persona, fully qualified to communicate a progressive social vision. (Stavely 66)

Milton first and foremost establishes his persona as a member of and a spokesman for the highly educated. The document's intellectual tone is particularly evident in the first section of *Areopagitica*. Here,

the persona refers to the teachers and philosophers of old Greece with the familiarity of close friends, and regularly interjects historical names and events into his discussion:

> If I should thus farre presume upon the meek demeanour of your civill and gentle greatnesse, Lords and Commons, as what your publisht Order hath directly said, that to gainsay, I might defend my selfe with ease, if any should accuse me of being new or insolent, did they but know how much better I find ye esteem it to imitate the old and elegant humanity of Greece, then the barbarick pride of a *Hunnish* and *Norwegian* statelines. And out of those ages, to whose polite wisdom and letters we ow that we are not yet *Gothes* and *Jutlanders*, I could name him who from his private house wrote that discourse to the Parlament of *Athens*, that perswades them to change the forme of *Democraty* which was then establisht. . . . Thus did *Dion Prusaeus* a stranger and a privat Orator counsell the *Rhodians* against a former Edict: and I abound with other like examples, which to set heer would be superfluous. But if from the industry of a life wholly dedicated to studious labours, and those naturall endowments haply not the worst for two and fifty degrees of northern latitude, so much must be derogated, as to count me not equall to any of those who had this priviledge, I would obtain to be thought not so inferior, as your selves are superior to the most of them who receiv'd their counsell. (489-90)

A number of interesting characteristics are evident in this rather small portion of the document. The most obvious of these is the great number of names and references that weight down this brief piece of text. In his references to the various countries and specifically to the Greek culture the persona not only implies his own familiarity with these places and events, but he also assumes the same level of knowledge in his reader. The names are mentioned but little explanation or amplification is offered by the writer. It is assumed that the reader, like the author, is familiar with the

characteristics of the Gothes, Jutlanders and the Hunnish and Norwegian states referred to in the text. It is also assumed that the veiled reference to Isocrates, "him who from his private house wrote that discourse to the Parliament of Athens," will be immediately recognized and understood. In these instances the persona not only communicates his own erudition, but he subtly compliments his audience by discussing these issues as if he is addressing an intellectual equal. This same approach is continued throughout the document. Even when the persona interjects with a criticism or warning it is carried out with a tone of respect.

The persona's authoritative and educated voice is intended to lend the argument credibility. Milton desires that his views be understood as those of the educated elite, and he is anxious to ensure that his persona's credentials are well established at the outset of the discussion. Since these credentials are included as part of the *ethos*, or the author's attempt to make the persona appealing to his audience, however, Milton's second concern is that this information be presented in an amiable manner, without branding the persona with a distasteful appearance of snobbery and without appearing to lord this high level of learning over the people he is attempting to impress. But while these objectives appear to have been satisfactorily accomplished, it must be asked at what cost they have been achieved. Most modern readers require a significant number of notations before they are able to appreciate the context and relevance of many of *Areopagitica's* references, and while it may be safe to assume a higher degree of familiarity among Milton's first readers, it seems reasonable to also assume that a good number

of these references would still have confounded a large portion of this original audience. To a great extent Milton required a certain degree of obscurity to make his point. Like the long and foreign sounding names used throughout *Paradise Lost*, the references in *Areopagitica* are included not only for the information borne in the references themselves, but also for the exotic and impressive mood they lend to the writing. The price of this mood, however, is clarity. Milton evidently felt that these gaps in understanding were worth the benefits that accrued from them, but it is difficult to determine whether this assumption was proven accurate. Modern studies in educational psychology reveal that unfamiliar terms and concepts not only impair the reader's comprehension but that they actually reduce the reader's ability to learn by subconsciously causing feelings of sleepiness and boredom. If this is in fact the case, it is possible that the document's astonishing lack of influence over its intended audience may be partly accounted for in this manner.

The second component of Milton's *ethos* is his patriotic appeal. This patriotic appeal is also evident in the extended passage from *Areopagitica* quoted above. It is interesting to note that throughout the document all negative attributes are assigned to foreign nations and people, while only England and Greece are consistently portrayed in a positive light. The English must be thankful that they are "not yet Gothes and Jutlanders," and although the British were equally guilty of licensing, the persona overlooks this fact and labels it a loathed Spanish practice (489). Milton's patriotic zeal is also communicated in a variety of other ways. Early in the document theatrical exaggeration is employed when Milton suggests that the

imprimatur's commands had to be written in Latin since "our English, the language of men ever famous, and formost in the atchievements of liberty, will not easily finde servile letters anow to spell such a dictatorie presumption English" (505). Later, he describes the worst possible insult for an Englishman as that of being considered either a "fool or a foreiner" (532), and finally, drawing near the end of the document (in what is commonly referred to as the national digression) Milton's personal love for and confidence in his country is beautifully and convincingly expressed:

> Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an Eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazl'd eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain it self of heav'nly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, and those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amaz'd at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticat a year of sects and schisms. (557-8).

The image is of course that of the biblical Samson as he is portrayed in Judges 16: 6-14, where, as Ernest Sirluck notes, Samson is described "frustrating the first three attempts of Delila and the Philistines to subdue him in his sleep" (558, note 253). This reference not only reinforces Milton's patriotic voice, but it also alludes to his third and perhaps most important qualification as a speaker: Christian faith and values. This qualification was no doubt considered the most important by Milton's audience, and it was also the point most in need of evidence and support. While the Parliament had no reason either to take note of, or to question Milton's learning and patriotism, *The Doctrine and Discipline of*

Divorce supplied ample cause to question his Christian beliefs. As Merrit Hughes notes, any members of Parliament who had not already read the divorce pamphlet would have been none the less aware of its existence as of August 16, 1644, on which date, shortly before *Areopagitica* was published, Milton and his unlicensed pamphlet on divorce were condemned in a parliamentary sermon by the Presbyterian divine Herbert Palmer (Hughes 716). But while Milton's audience most likely required extra persuasion to be convinced of Milton's Christian convictions, this requirement is easily met by *Areopagitica*. Not only does Milton frame his discussion in the context of the biblical pursuit of truth, but he reiterates the doctrinal aspects of his argument through literary images and biblical references.

As both Alan Price and John Evans have pointed out in their articles on the imagery of *Areopagitica*, a variety of images are used to good effect throughout the document.[8] These images run parallel to the argumentative structure of the speech and, as Evans points out, these images not only satisfy the reader's requirements for wit and rhetorical finesse, but they actually restate and emphasize the author's primary arguments. John Evans develops Price's thesis of the importance of *Areopagitica's* "incidental" imagery to a further point by suggesting that the imagery is not only incidental but rather

---

[8]Alan Price's article entitled "Incidental Imagery in *Areopagitica* " appeared in *Modern Philology* in May 1952. John Evans' article "Imagery as argument in Milton's *Areopagitica*" appeared in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* in 1966. Evans notes that other than Alan Price, only Theodore Banks (In *Milton's Imagery*, New York, 1950) approached the topic but his interest was limited to the biographical information the images provide (Evans 190).

fundamental to Milton's thesis and of structural rather than decorative importance:

> I regard these patterns as parathematic statements, which not only add dramatic emphasis to a context, but conceptualize it in different terms, and thereby help compensate for the absence of the argument for separation of church and state, which Milton did not use for fear of antagonizing the Erastians, a faction that had supported the Licensing Order, and yet was the most likely of any group to change its position if presented with the right reasons. (Evans 190)

Whether or not Milton's approach to the imagery of *Areopagitica* was really influenced by a decision to withhold an argument against the separation of church and state, Evans's observation about the manner in which the imagery operates within the text is perceptive. But although Evans draws attention to the ways in which the various tropes and metaphors are used to sustain and enrich various points of the argument, he too fails to note the consistent underlying premise these diverse images are actually supporting. Each of the major images employed by Milton in *Areopagitica* either overtly or inadvertently underscores the biblical or religious arguments which flow as an undercurrent throughout the document.[9] Although Milton seldom engages in a direct justification of unlicensed printing by quoting scripture, he uses his imagery to infuse his arguments with Christian philosophy and teaching. In so doing Milton accomplishes two things: he achieves the "high density" of information described by McLuhan by layering his argument and thereby crowding out interference and ensuring all possible means of communicating his

---

[9] Evans points out that the religious theme forms the heart of Milton's argument, but he fails to note how the various images support this theme.

message are used to maximum effect, and he subtly establishes his credentials as a faithful Christian. The most notable of these images are the personifications of both books and truth and the metaphors of life and death, light and darkness.

The personification of books is the first image to appear within the text. It occurs after the somewhat lengthy introductory remarks and shortly before the conclusion of the preface:

> For Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are; nay they do preserve as in a voill the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragons teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand unlesse warinesse be use'd, as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee who destroys a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to a life beyond life. (492-3)

The most obvious connection with theological argumentation is the statement that a good book is a "reasonable creature, God's Image." As Evans points out, behind this statement is the philosophy that sees the faculty of reason as the aspect that distinguishes man from beast:

> At the heart of Milton's argument is his conviction that books are the repository of human reason, the image of God in man and the faculty that puts man at the head of all temporal things, nearest to God and the angels in the great chain of being. (Evans 191)

The most important aspect of this argument is the link it establishes between reason and God (which we may assume was already well understood by Milton's audience) and then between books and reason. Milton's personification of books makes the books not only human, but in fact the most valuable aspect of humanity -- the very image of God. This explicit reference is also enriched by several more subtle images. For instance, books are described as "the life-blood of a master spirit." This image is consistent with the earlier simile that connects books with a liquid capable of being stored in a vial, but it is also impregnated with religious import. In comparing books to a "life-blood" capable of providing a "life beyond life," Milton endows his subject with Christ-like power. By Christ's own life-blood the Christian is provided with the hope of life beyond life, and through the "purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect" contained within books the Christian will find the aid required to realize that hope. Through the extension of this metaphor of books as men, Milton is also able to compare licensing to murder:

> 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great losse; and revolutions of ages doe not oft recover the losse of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole Nations fare the worse. We should be wary therefore what persecution we raise against the living labours of publick men, how we spill that season'd life of man preserv'd and stor'd up in Books; since we see a kinde of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdome, and if it extend to the whole impression, a kinde of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elementall life, but strikes at that ethereall and fift essence, the breath of reason it selfe, slaies an immortality rather then a life. (493)

The final extension of this comparison allows Christian licensers to be compared with Christ's Jewish persecutors. Although it is very subtle, these similes and metaphors combine to suggest a radical parallel between "the word" conveyed through the often controversial books and "the Word" as it was embodied in the person of Jesus Christ. Just as the Jews attempted to silence God's revealed word by crucifying Christ, so the Christian licensers are muzzling God's revealed word to his people as they destroy books. The Gospel of St. John provides the scriptural basis for regarding Christ as "the word of God":

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (KJV John 1: 1-5)

The idea that books embody the key to eternal salvation is also conveyed in the personification of truth. This image builds on the associations established with the personification of books. For instance, the association of books with liquids and pure essence is similarly applied to truth. Milton uses a direct reference to the Bible when he states that "truth is compar'd in Scripture to a streaming fountain" (543). This image is also complemented by a less explicit reference to "the cruse of truth" that "must run no more oyle" (541). This reference parallels the image of books as the pure essence capable of being stored in a vial. The association of both books and truth with this rather distinctive image of a liquid establishes a subtle, but very important, similarity between the two. When the

two separate references are combined through the use of a common vehicle, the tenor of Milton's images becomes the idea that all books are a source of truth.[10] But while his audience's attitudes toward books make this an untenable and insupportable claim were it to be presented boldly, this same claim is acceptable when it is subtly conveyed by way of the document's imagery. As Alan Price contends, this emphasis on tenor is the principal objective of Milton's use of imagery:

> This along with the other examples given of the personification of books and "Truth" illustrates Milton's most important method of image-making in *Areopagitica*. He is not mainly concerned to give pleasurable illumination by fusing disparate elements into a new whole, by revealing "a balance or reconcilement of opposite or discordant qualities." This imaginative synthesis is, of course, present in varying degrees in all his images and personifications, but the main effect is to direct liking or loathing toward the ideas embodied in the "tenor" of the image by means of the associations aroused by the "vehicle" of the image. (Price 218)

The association of books and truth through a common image makes it possible for the reader to draw a very desirable conclusion about the relationship between these two elements. Through the same psychological process of transference that allows logical fallacies like the *Abusive Ad Hominum* to succeed, books and truth become equated in the reader's mind. This process of transference encourages the reader to reason that since both books and truth are described by the same image, then books and truth must be

---

10 "Tenor" is defined by The Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms as the "purport or general drift of thought regarding the subject of the metaphor" and "vehicle" is defined as "that which serves to carry or embody the tenor as the analogy brought to the subject" (Preminger 278).

themselves very similar. The process may be expressed by the following equation: If (A implies C) and (B implies C) then (A implies B). This is not always a sound logical deduction, but it is an attractive assumption, especially when the author deliberately draws his reader's attention away from the deductive process by directing the reference to his subconscious mind.

The insinuated equation of books and truth is not the only object of this metaphoric representation of Truth as a "cruse of truth." As Ernst Sirluck notes, this phrase is an oblique reference to Scripture. The words are derived from 1 Kings 17: 9-16 when Elijah requests a morsel of bread from the poor widow. As *The Matthew Henry Commentary on the Bible* suggests, the incident referred to by Milton in this passage reiterates a theme repeated throughout Scripture (and perhaps most often in the Book of Judges) that "it is God's way, and it is his glory, to make use of the weak and foolish things of this world and put honour upon them" (Henry 386). The appropriateness of this particular reference is clear when it is placed beside the second of the four arguments against licensing presented in *Areopagitica* :

> "Tis next alleg'd we must not expose our selves to temptations without necessity, and next to that, not imploy our time in vain things. To both these objections one answer will serve, out of the grounds already laid, that to all men such books are not temptations, nor vanities; but usefull drugs and materialls wherewith to temper and compose effective and strong med'cins, which mans life cannot want. (521)

Just as it is to God's glory to make use of humble and foolish people, Milton argues, it is also to his glory to make use of seemingly vain

and misguided writing. This reference functions as a substantiation or proof of the inference made through the association of books and truth. While supporters of the licensing bill would reject the suggestion that truth may be found in "bad" books, this counter argument is anticipated and addressed by the same image that provoked the question. Once again the image returns the reader to an underlying biblical argument. Through this successive layering of information and meaning Milton reiterates his points on a number of levels. This "high density" content arrests the reader's deductive powers and directs the process of interpretation in favour of the author's point of view. Although the narrator is reluctant (and, as was discussed earlier, with good reason) to engage directly in a scriptural debate except in very controlled and specific instances, he enlists the emotional power contained in biblical phrases to enrich the pathetic appeal of his arguments.

The personification of truth also reiterates the underlying biblical or religious argument in a much more general fashion. In keeping with Greek tradition Milton chooses to personify the virtue of truth as a female. She is simultaneously the "beleagured truth" in need of the armed assistance of Justice, and the competent warrior whose often "misdoubted" strength sees her victorious in all confrontations with falsehood. This personification is reminiscent of the *Pyschomachia* of Prudentius in which the female virtues engage in armed combat for the soul of man. The somewhat contradictory description of truth as both the weak and victimized virtue and as the successful combatant is characteristic of the various allegories that originated in the Middle Ages but continued to circulate during

the Renaissance. In the allegory of the four daughters of God, for example, the weaker virtues of Mercy and Peace finally achieve victory when their stronger sisters Justice and Truth concede to their pleas. Of course the dichotomy of weakness and strength which is worked out in these allegories is also the central and defining attribute of the Christian God who is both nurturer and warrior, dispenser of mercy and of justice. Milton's personification of Truth as both a victim and a warrior underscores his argument that truth must freely and actively be sought and defended, yet it also reassures the reader that truth will always prevail when put to the test.

Areopagitica also includes rich and evocative images of life and death. As was the case with the previous images, these also emphasize the tenor of Milton's specific argument while also contributing to the religious and scriptural subtext. As John Evans points out, "Milton viewed the controversy over licensing as, quite literally, a matter of life (intellectual and spiritual) and death, and the interrelated metaphoric patterns of *Areopagitica* reiterate this concern throughout the essay" (192). Books are equated with life. They are "the life-blood of a master spirit," the "living labours of publik men," and open presses are the "birthright" of all Englishmen. Meanwhile licensers are depicted as judges who "sit upon the birth, or death of books" -- they are the jealous Junos who stifle "the issue of the womb" (493,505,530). As Evans indicates, and as the preceding discussion of the personification of books has demonstrated, the image of life is not restricted to mortal life, but rather it also encompasses the idea of spiritual life or eternal life.

This broader definition of "life" is provoked by the various scriptural references and allusions that resonate throughout the document, but it is also encouraged by specific references made in conjunction with these images. For instance, the death brought about through the killing of a good book not only constitutes the killing of a human being (homicide), or the killing of a heroic human being who is willing to die for his beliefs (martyrdom), or even the indiscriminate and merciless killing of many human beings (massacre), but rather the killing of an "immortality" (493). By slaying an immortality the licensers are not responsible for the murder of mortals, but for the murder of souls. Milton's choice of the word "immortality" is itself important as the term is steeped in biblical meaning that is of relevance to this particular discussion. Romans 2: 7-8, for example, contains both a promise of immortality for the faithful and a threat of God's indignation and wrath:

> To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.

The most compelling echo to arise from Milton's choice of the term "immortality," however, is that which originates in 1 Corinthians 16: 54 and 55:

> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Here immortality is clearly linked with the promise of eternal salvation and after-life. This particular reference is interesting, as it

juxtaposes the concepts of life and death which Milton weaves throughout *Areopagitica*, and it declares immortality as one of the two armours against death. The Christian armed with both God's own incorruptibility and immortality will share in the victory over death. Placed within the context of *Areopagitica*, this quotation serves to solidify the implied equation of books, truth and eternal salvation that operates throughout the document. If Milton is correct in his assumption that the parliamentary members and especially the Presbyterian divines had a substantial command of the Scriptures, then it will also be safe to assume that the charge that licensing slays an immortality would have registered (at the very least in the backs of their minds) as an offence against eternal salvation.

The images of light and darkness used throughout *Areopagitica* function in a manner very similar to those previously discussed. In this case, however, there is little need to establish the presence of biblical echoes operating within these images, as the words themselves are synonymous with the language of Scripture, and may almost be regarded as biblical shorthand for the concepts of goodness and evil, and for a symbolic representation of Christ and Satan. In *Areopagitica* Milton employs these images to represent concepts similar to those that they traditionally represent in the Bible. Light is associated with the Reformation and with truth; conversely, all enemies to these ideas are characterized as extinguishers of light (548). As Price points out, Milton's images in *Areopagitica* are seldom ingenious or startling; rather he makes good use of the traditional and commonplace to emphasize his point:

> Such widely used images as light, sun and darkness require very skilful handling, but Milton's treatment is never commonplace: freshness is gained by the homely: "Yet when the new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy, and oppose, if it come not first in at their casements." (Price 220, *Areopagitica* 562)

By using familiar images Milton is able to build the successive layers of meaning that work so effectively within *Areopagitica*. Since the scriptural argument is primarily based within the subtext of his document, Milton must ensure that the references are common enough to stir the reader into making the correct associations. The argumentative strength of *Areopagitica* rests upon the familiarity of images like light and dark, life and death, but the literary greatness is achieved by Milton's singularly appropriate turns of phrase and uncommon juxtapositions of otherwise ordinary thoughts and concepts.

The final aspect of Milton's *pathos* (or appeal to his audience's emotions) that deserves mention is his deliberate effort to associate licensing with his audience's religious and political enemies and the hated "Catholic" practices of the recently ousted monarchy. Milton makes these associations in a variety of ways, using everything from open satire to subtle choices in diction to convey his point.

During Milton's initial discussion of the originators of licensing no efforts are spared in ridiculing and degrading the Catholic foe. The Popes of Rome are openly accused of "engrossing what they pleased of political rule" (501), and the "glutton Friers" who were actually responsible for licensing the books are shown no mercy:

> To fill up the measure of encroachment, their last invention was to ordain that no Book, pamphlet, or paper should be Printed (as if S. *Peter* had bequeath'd them the keys of the Presse also out of Paradise) unlesse it were approv'd and licenc't under the hands of 2 or 3 glutton Friers. . . . Sure they have a conceit, if he of the bottomlesse pit had not long since broke prison, that this quadruple exorcism would barre him down. . . . Sometimes 5 *Imprimaturs* are seen together dialogue-wise in the Piatza of one Title page, complementing and ducking each to other with their shav'n reverences, whether the Author, who stands by in perplexity at the foot of his Epistle, shall to the Presse or to the spunge. These are the prety responsories, these are the deare Antiphonies that so bewitcht of late our Prelats, and their Chaplaines with the goodly Eccho they made; and besotted us to the gay imitation of a lordly *Imprimatur*. . . . (503-4)

In this passage echoes of Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Summoner's Tale" may be heard in the ribald descriptions of the Friars. The language is fresh and colloquial and the tone is both vituperative and jaunty. Since the Friars may be safely assumed to be common foes, their ridicule is obviously intended to be received as a shared joke among men of like minds. Although these passages also contain a slight edge of vehemence in the author's voice, the accusations never stray into specific and contestable complaints, but rather they remain in the category of humorous insults as they exploit the same stereotypical characteristics satirized by Chaucer well over 200 years before.

Apart from these very obvious indulgences in satire and ridicule, there may be found in *Areopagitica* a great number of more subtle associations of loathed Roman Catholic practices and the practice of licensing. Throughout this document Milton's characteristic attention to detail is evidenced in his diction. As

Thomas N. Corns points out in his book, *The Development of Milton's Prose Style*, Milton does not restrict himself to the most obvious opportunities for creating the desired associations (like the reference to the licensor's index as a "new purgatory"[503]), but he also makes use of word sounds and, whenever necessary, he coins new words to convey his message:

> In the context of linguistic borrowing, Milton, ironically so often regarded as the arch-classicist, is avowedly a populist and a nationalist. This can probably be seen best in his onslaught in *Areopagitica* on the word "imprimatur," borrowed into English in 1640 and for which no alternative seems to have been formed out of the native resources of the language. (Corns 70)

In another discussion of Milton's diction in *Animadversions*, Corns makes several interesting observations that also shed light on Milton's diction in *Areopagitica* :

> "Imprimaturs" is conspicuous by its unfamiliarity in English discourse . . . and it is immediately recognizable as an inflected form of a Latin verb. As used by Milton in the context of this vituperative passage, its strangeness seems to connote the outlandishness of the prelatical censors. The effect is reinforced by the six-syllabled "expurgatorious', formed by Milton himself from a Latin loan-word, "expurgate", first noted by the OED in 1621, or else directly from the modern Latin "expurgatorius". Not only is it unfamiliar and strikingly long, but also its echo of "purgatory" makes a subtle, perhaps even subliminal connection between the prelates and the Catholicism with which he would associate them. (Corns 7)

This same theory may be witnessed in *Areopagitica* in Milton's choice of adjectives like "inquisiturient," which is used to modify the noun "bishops". In this particular example the adjective establishes a direct relationship between the Bishops who "snatcht up" the practice

of licensing so eagerly and the barbaric practices of the Spanish inquisitors.

A similar tactic is also employed by Milton in his association of licensing with other equally detested but non-religious aspects of the former regime. Drawing near the close of the document, we note that several key references are made to the very contentious issues of tunnaging and poundaging and to the system of monopolies:

> Nothing writt'n but what passes through the custom-house of certain Publicans that have the tunaging and the poundaging of all free spok'n truth, will strait give themselvs up into your hands, mak'em, & cut'em out what religion ye please. (545)

In this derogatory description of one of the individuals who will benefit from the licensing system, Milton employs a powerful reference to perhaps the most famous and most detested aspect of Charles's rule in order to assure his meaning is communicated to his audience. A similar tactic is employed in the closing lines of the document when Milton blames the government's decision to re-establish a licensing practice on corrupt book sellers who are attempting to corner a lucrative market for themselves:

> And how it got the upper hand of your precedent Order so well constituted before, if we may beleeve those men whose profession gives them cause to enquire most, it may be doubted there was in it the fraud of some old *patentees* and *monopolizers* in the trade of book-selling; who under pretence of the poor in their Company not to be defrauded, and the just retaining of each man his severall copy, which God forbid should be gainsaid, brought divers glosing colours to the House, which were indeed but colours, and serving to no end except it be to excercise a superiority over their neighbours. (570)

Milton's selection of adjectives not only serves to condemn the accused book-sellers in his readers' minds, but it also reiterates the association between licensing and the corruptness of the monarchy. In such a brief space Milton manages to arouse his audience's emotions and to direct these negative feelings toward a policy brought about by this audience, while simultaneously directing the blame for this policy to the Stationer's Company.

As this discussion indicates, *Areopagitica* must be considered a formidable example of rhetorical skill despite Milton's own assertion of his inadequacies as a prose writer. In *Reason of Church Government*, Milton makes the following statement:

> I should not chuse this manner of writing [prose] wherein knowing myself inferior to my self, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand. (Milton, Reason, 808)

As editor Don Wolfe notes, the "left hand" mentioned by Milton is significant not only because of the image of awkwardness it assigns to the author, but because "the left hand, being of lesser importance, suggests a less honourable type of work as well as ineptness on the part of the artist" (Milton, Reason 808, note 48). This idea of the left hand being "less honourable" stems from the long standing tradition that associated the left with evil and the right with goodness. This tradition may have also influenced an interesting and relevant statement made by Dante Alighieri in his essay *On Eloquence* regarding the left or right-handedness of rhetoric:

> For, since everything we write is sung towards the right or toward the left -- poems are either persuasive or dissuasive, either congratulatory or ironic, either in praise or in

> contempt -- the words tending to the left will hurry toward the end, while their opposites will take due time with each part in coming to the end. (Alighieri 60)

This statement is interesting as, by its definition, Milton's prose truly does fit the description of being "of the left hand." As the dissuasive, ironic and contemptuous elements in *Areopagitica* suggest, Dante's description of left-handed rhetoric is certainly more appropriate than his definition of right-handed rhetoric, but it is also more appropriate to *Areopagitica* and Milton's prose works in general than any suggestion that the prose itself is of inferior quality.

In *Areopagitica* Milton presents a very competent piece of rhetoric in which he is careful to address all of the classical requirements of *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. These requirements, however, are met in a somewhat unusual manner whereby a good number of these appeals are embodied in the subtext of the discussion -- in the subtleties of his language and in the tenor of his images. As a result of this unusually complex and, to some degree, covert style, a substantial portion of the argumentation in *Areopagitica* appeals to the audience's emotion, or suggests meaning to its subconscious. Through this technique of layering meaning, Milton creates a document with an extraordinarily high density of information. If Marshall McLuhan's theories regarding high density or "hot" media may be also applied to the content of a given medium, then *Areopagitica* must be regarded as a highly manipulative document. In any situation a charge of manipulation would raise ethical questions about the author's right to appeal to his audience's emotions rather than to its reason, but this is especially the case in a document like *Areopagitica*, which is ostensibly a "reasonable" plea

for a more Christ-like approach to the licensing issue. In order to assess Milton's ethics, it is appropriate to compare his views with those held by both respected rhetoricians and by Christian philosophers.

In his book on rhetoric, Aristotle recognizes the power and responsibility of the orator, and he is ever concerned about the ethical issues of any given rhetorical technique. While he acknowledges that reason is the best and most upright means of persuasion, he does not discount or discourage the use of less logical techniques. In his introduction to the *Rhetoric*, Lane Cooper summarizes Aristotle's views in the following manner:

> The emphasis is always upon the nature of the person to be persuaded, and the means by which it is possible, and just, to persuade him. The one legitimate means is reasonable argument; but since man is an emotional creature, and audiences are sure to be swayed by emotion, the speaker has to reckon with this side of his audience, and to deal with it. (Cooper xxi)

Quintilian, who is most noted for his attention to ethics, also concurs that within ethical boundaries, an orator must do what is necessary to win. Despite the obvious qualifications of these writers to speak on the question of rhetoric, the true test of Milton's ethics must come from a trusted Christian authority. In this case the obvious choice is St. Augustine. Augustine, who was once a manichean rhetorician, left his early beliefs to become one of the most influential Christian writers and theologians. In both his *Confessions* and in his *Doctrina Christiana*, St. Augustine expresses his disgust with rhetoric that is used for the sole purpose of demonstrating the orator's prowess, or for the perpetuation of error, but he also stresses the value of

rhetorical skill for Christians who desire to argue convincingly for truth:

> There are also certain principles of a more abundant kind of disputation, which is called eloquence. Athough they can be employed in convincing us of falsehood, nevertheless, they themselves are true. Since they can be employed also in the service of truths, the power itself is not culpable, but the bad faith of those who misuse it is. (108)

Thus Milton's techniques are justified. His attempts to persuade with emotional rather than logical appeals are supported in Scripture when Christ tells his followers "behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (KJV Matt 10:16). Milton's approach may be therefore acknowledged as a sheep's effort to confront the parliamentary wolves of falsehood and repression with the serpent's wisdom. With the exception of his misrepresentation of the history of licensing as it applied to England, and perhaps of his somewhat misleading representation of his own arguments as logical and reasonable, Milton does not argue in bad faith. His motivations for writing *Areopagitica* are certainly above condemnation as mere exercises in rhetoric, despite the exceptionally high level of skill the document exhibits.

Of course, for Milton's contemporaries the issue of *Areopagitica's* ethics turned out to be of little concern since, despite the exceptional skill with which Milton crafted both the content and the form of *Areopagitica*, the document had an astounding lack of influence on its original audience. More remarkable than this early disregard, however, is the enthusiasm with which Milton's ideas have

been revived in later periods. When (nearly one hundred years later) both the populace and the civil authorities finally embraced the philosophy of intellectual and religious freedom, *Areopagitica* was resurrected from its grave of disgrace and reinstated as an exemplary statement of these newly adopted philosophical ideals. Although it has recently become fashionable for literary critics to reassess and re-condemn *Areopagitica* for being too conservative and contradictory in its endorsement of fundamental freedoms, the document continues to exert substantial influence over modern censorship issues. While judicial experts may not refer directly to *Areopagitica* by name, Milton's powerful rhetoric continues to make itself felt powerfully throughout twentieth-century debates.

Chapter Four

The Debate Continues: *Areopagitica's* Contemporary and Current Influence on the Censorship Debate

It is a surprising but indisputable fact that *Areopagitica* received little attention from either the citizens or government officials to whom it was first addressed. As William Haller points out in his extensive study of the *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution*, despite both the literary excellence and the persuasive style of John Milton's plea against licensed printing, *Areopagitica* and the other pamphlets that argued for free press during this time had no effect on licensing practices. An examination of the events subsequent to the publishing of *Areopagitica* suggests that the British Parliament of 1644 was not even interested in the ideals of personal freedom expressed by Milton, Richard Overton, John Lilburne and others, let alone prepared to deal with the political consequences of these ideals. As is so often the case with revolutionary ideas, however, the time and place for *Areopagitica* did eventually arrive, although much later than its author had intended. While Milton's document failed to achieve its immediate objectives, it has proven its universality by resisting the obscurity that awaits inferior arguments. As modern references to *Areopagitica* prove, Milton's arguments are as relevant and vital today as only Milton himself knew them to be three hundred and forty-five years ago.

This discussion will focus on the social and political events that immediately followed *Areopagitica* in an effort to explain the reception the document received. It will then examine the relevance of the arguments contained within *Areopagitica* to modern censorship debates and legislation. Although the terms of the censorship debate have altered significantly in the years since *Areopagitica* was first published, the philosophy and arguments propounded by Milton continue to shape current thinking to a degree that far exceeds its initial influence.

In his discussion of England's censorship history, Fredrick Siebert includes the following summary of *Areopagitica's* influence:

> In its own day and upon its own contemporaries the *Areopagitica* had very little effect. It was published in only one edition (was not republished until 1738 with the exception of an abridgment in 1693) and went unmentioned by most of the writers and public men of the times. (Siebert 196)

It seems that *Areopagitica*, unlike many of the other pamphlets written in defense of a free press during this time, was not only ineffectual but ignored. Documents like Overton's *Arraignement of Mr. Persecution* and Lilburne's *A Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens* earned both men much notoriety and several years in prison. Milton, however, was never penalized for *Areopagitica* and, what is more surprising, the great arguments contained in the document itself were never quoted by subsequent writers. At the conclusion of his search for contemporary references to *Areopagitica*, William Haller was compelled to draw the following conclusion:

> It appears incredible that Milton's great plea for freedom of the press should have failed of any mention whatever in the thousands of pages printed at the time and abounding in specific references to hundreds of other publications, but the present writer is constrained to report that after a protracted search he has failed to find a single one. Surely, if the appearance of *Areopagitica* were ever to be noted, it should have been by Prynne in that chapter of his *Fresh Discovery*, written according to Thomason's dating about six months after the publication of *Areopagitica*, and devoted to the recent attacks upon the printing ordinance. But Prynne assails Henry Robinson, Lilburne, and the anonymous tracts of Overton, completely ignoring Milton. (Haller 135)

It is difficult to say exactly why *Areopagitica* received so little attention. Haller suggests that, despite his active participation in the episcopal debates and his infamous divorce heresy, Milton was actually little known among his contemporaries. Haller then concludes that this obscurity allowed the document to go unnoticed. While this theory does explain why the most ruthless of Milton's opponents failed to comment on his personal and marital problems in the many attacks that followed the early pamphlets and the divorce tracts, it does not sufficiently answer for *Areopagitica's* reception. What is more likely than Haller's theory of obscurity is that the document's complimentary tone failed to generate the same contempt from Parliament that was brought about by both Overton's and Lilburne's deliberate attempts to secure publicity for themselves and their cause. It must be recalled that Milton had established himself as a supporter of Parliament and had argued on their behalf on several occasions before breaking with them over the divorce issue. The strength of this former alliance coupled with the generally respectful tone of *Areopagitica* may have tempered any punitive

actions that may have been contemplated by Parliament. But while it is difficult to ascertain why *Areopagitica* received so little notice, it is not at all difficult to explain why the requests for a free press presented in this and other documents were not granted. In 1644 the parliamentary government was still engaged in war with the King, and while the battle of Marston Moor had established Parliament's hold on the North and generally boosted their hopes for victory, the governmental climate continued to be unstable, and political necessity took precedent over philosophical theories of good government.

At the time *Areopagitica* was published, Parliament was attempting to purge the government of all traces of the Monarchy, and it was also trying to establish parliamentary systems of control. Eight months before *Areopagitica* was released, Archbishop Laud had been tried and convicted of crimes against the Commonwealth; two months after *Areopagitica* was released, Laud was executed. In June of 1645 the civil war was brought to a new climax with the defeat of the King's forces at Naseby by the Scots. The Battle at Naseby brought about the ruin of the King, but a stable political environment was still a distant dream. Although Charles was forced to surrender to the Scots soon after the battle at Naseby, he did not abandon his cause. Charles's hopes for a change in fortune were largely based on the rising discontent he observed between Parliament and the army. Since their victory over Prince Rupert in the Battle of Marston Moor on July 2, 1644, the army, under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, had established itself as a dominant force within the parliamentary camp. Under Cromwell's leadership

the army was "remodelled" into the efficient and well-motivated Ironsides, and it was also established as the stronghold for the Independents. As the Presbyterian majority in Parliament began to challenge the Independents' demands for freedom of conscience, tensions between the two groups increased. It was with the hope that these tensions would eventually bring about the destruction of Parliament that Charles refused to sign the Newcastle proposals (which among other things demanded that Charles support the Presbyterian establishment) that were presented to him by Parliament in July of 1646. On January 30th of the following year Charles was handed over to Parliament by the Scots in return for back pay in excess of 400,000 pounds. Within a short period of time after this event, Parliament ordered the army to disband. The army, however, refused to obey this order until demands for freedom of conscience were met, and they seized Charles as a means of establishing their bargaining power.

Given the volatile condition of government during this period, Parliament's refusal to support the continuance of anti-government propaganda is not surprising. Parliament was not concerned about the relative values of free versus censored press, but rather about keeping itself in power. The best means of retaining this power seemed to involve censorship of potentially destabilizing propaganda, and hence Parliament focused its efforts on securing stringent control of undesirable material. Thus, the efforts of Milton, Lilburne and Overton were not met with a decrease in governmental control, but rather with yet another special committee designed to regulate the exchange of ideas. This particular committee was established in

November of 1647 with a mandate to "investigate and suppress unlicensed books" (Siebert 190). As Siebert points out, Parliament was "aghast at the monster, public opinion, which it had raised up and which in turn was threatening to destroy it" (Siebert 179). Siebert also points out that while Milton and the other visionaries were engaged in efforts to secure new freedoms, the parliamentary reformers were merely securing a means of changing the source of the controlled views rather than working toward the abolition of the controls themselves:

> The theory held by Parliament during the civil wars -- that the press should be strictly regulated and that the Houses of Parliament, instead of the crown, were the proper sources of the authority to regulate -- was based on both precedent and expediency. The civil wars represented a conflict in political and religious symbols with the latter predominating, and it was impossible for the leaders of the revolt to dissociate themselves from the intellectual climate of the age. Only a few individuals were able to grasp those principles which became current only after a century of more of experimentation. The basic opposition of the Puritan reformers to the control of the press by the crown was directed not against the fundamental principle of "control," but against the kind of control which discriminated against their particular religious or political tenets. (Siebert 191)

Thus, the persuasive reasoning of *Areopagitica* fell upon deaf ears largely because the reasoning itself failed to address its audience's most pressing concerns. The issue of whether or not the free exchange of ideas was the best system for a renewed church and government remained of little concern to Parliament so long as the very power to make such decisions remained in jeopardy. Even after the second civil war, the execution of Charles I, and the

establishment of Cromwell's Commonwealth in 1649, the government's right to govern was still sufficiently tenuous to necessitate further controls. As Siebert points out, none of the ruling parties was prepared to deal with the unruly power wielded by the presses. Although each had argued for more liberal approaches while still rising to power, none, including Cromwell, was able to allow this power to remain unchecked:

> Complete freedom was not considered as one of the possible solutions largely for these reasons: historical precedents were lacking, experimentation had not yet demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the traditional regulations, government was not yet considered an instrument of the people for their own well-being and therefore participation even by the middle classes although tolerated at times was not an accepted tenet of those in power, the sensitiveness of public officials to comment and criticism by the public at large, the inexperience of the channels of communication in delivering and the public in digesting a free and uncontrolled flow of information and comment on public issues, and lastly the age had not learned a restrained and civilized toleration of divergent points of view. (Siebert 220-221)

Even the Commonwealth government that had fought for power to ensure freedom of conscience perpetuated the system of controls -- this time, through the use of new ordinances and military measures.

One of the most remarkable facts concerning the system of control exercised by Cromwell is that John Milton participated in its enforcement. Milton's participation in the drafting of the Press Act of September 20, 1649 has remained for many modern critics one of the largest barriers to a complete appreciation of *Areopagitica*. As Siebert points out, most critics are led to conclude that Milton's subsequent involvement with the very governmental controls he

writes so vehemently against in *Areopagitica* is evidence that he was either so feebly committed to these principles that he was able to change his mind swiftly when it became expedient to do so, or evidence that Milton had never intended *Areopagitica* to be interpreted as a plea for liberty for anything but the most "serious and scholarly" books (Siebert 197). Although Milton's involvement is difficult to justify given the scant details concerning the personal decisions that motivated his actions, modern critics like Siebert do both Milton and *Areopagitica* a great disservice by so readily accepting these disappointing conclusions. It is quite possible, and indeed likely if Milton's behaviour in similar circumstances is taken into account, that Milton's participation in the drafting of this act was a deliberate move to secure the ideals expressed in *Areopagitica* rather than a public breach of these commitments. The complete lack of reaction that followed *Areopagitica* was no doubt of great interest to Milton, and he is sure to have considered the reasons for this reaction very seriously. It is reasonable to assume that Milton would have come to the same conclusion about *Areopagitica's* failure as has been reached by the modern historians and governmental analysts who have since studied the events. In targeting his appeal to the theological and philosophical ramifications of censorship, Milton overlooked or underestimated the power of the absolute necessities for political survival that faced his audience, and, as a result, the power of persuasion was completely removed from his otherwise potent argument. Having reached this conclusion, Milton faced two alternatives: he could retreat with his ideals intact and abandon all hope of effecting even the most modest change, or he

could decide to work within the parameters of political necessity and try at least to bring about an improvement in the licensing situation, even if a complete abandonment of the repressive system was beyond hope. Lilburne and Overton proved that obstinate resistance and defiance of governmental ordinances were at best minimally effective, and the persistence and optimism for the future exhibited by Milton in *Areopagitica* make it unlikely that he should choose to abandon all efforts. It is quite possible, then, that Milton accepted this seemingly contradictory position as a government censor in order to further the cause put forth in *Areopagitica*. This view is endorsed by William Riley Parker in his extensive biography of Milton:

> It would be strange indeed if, when considering the proposal of the Council, Milton did not see public office as presenting certain possibilities for effecting reforms which he had fought for in vain as a private individual. If he did his work well, he would undoubtedly have influence on, as well as easy access to, the new leaders of government. Perhaps the dreams of *Areopagitica*, for example, could at last come true. (Parker 354)

Parker continues to explain that while we have no way of knowing exactly what, if any, influence Milton was able to exert, it is reasonable to assume that he would have taken advantage of all opportunities at his command to effect the desired change. As Parker observes, the Bradshaw's Press Act, as finally passed by Parliament on September 20, 1649, "is a truly extraordinary document" (Parker 354):

> Penned by a clever lawyer, it half conceals the art of a wise statesman. On a superficial reading it seems even more

> severe than the previous law, and indeed, it does require strict censorship of all newsletters. But Milton, not missing the point of the progress actually achieved, was able to summarize it thus to his sympathetic friend, Samuel Hartlib: 'There are no licensors appointed by the last Act, so that everybody may enter in his book without license, provided the printer's or author's name be entered, that they may be forthcoming if required.' (Parker 354)

As Parker points out, the elimination of licensers was one of Milton's major goals in writing *Areopagitica*. But while Milton's collaboration with the Cromwellian regime may be optimistically credited with having eased (or if not eased, at least changed and made less repugnant) the stringent controls exerted upon the press, real strides toward the ideals described in *Areopagitica* were not made until well after Milton's death.

Throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, the philosophical underpinnings of the censoring system remained intact. Government was still largely entrusted with the welfare of the voting public who were considered, by both themselves and by magistrates, to be incapable of the discernment required for complex philosophical and theological questions. However, sometime during the second quarter of the eighteenth century this sentiment began to change. In a landmark trial held in New York in 1728, newspaper publisher Peter Zenger was acquitted of charges of libel on the royal governor on the basis of arguments for freedom of expression. This acquittal was granted despite clear evidence that Zenger had published the offensive material in question. This decision reflected the changing attitudes toward both the role of government and the need for free exchange of ideas, even when these ideas contradict governmental authority.

As Siebert notes, it was at this time that both the British and American publics became ready to reconsider the ideals described in *Areopagitica* :

> A new edition of Milton's *Areopagitica*, the first since the original publication in 1644, accomplished what the original failed to achieve -- it aroused public support for the philosophical principles of freedom of mind. (Siebert 383)

From this point changes in the attitude toward censorship and the types of censorship practices altered appreciably. During the latter half of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century, the emphasis of the censorship issue gradually shifted from concerns over the suppression of anti-government propaganda to a concern over the suppression of morally incorrect material. The sexual explicitness of novels like D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* became of more pressing concern to early twentieth-century society than the anti-government propaganda that had concerned previous generations. This trend has continued into the present day. Although the objects of censorship have changed a great deal during the last three hundred years, the issue of censorship itself remains relevant. As Donald Thomas points out in his study of the history of literary censorship in England, "the relevant question at any stage of human history is not 'Does censorship exist?' but rather, 'Under what sort of censorship do we now live?'" (Thomas 7). It may be accounted as yet more proof of Milton's keen prophetic insight that these changes in the focus of censorship have improved rather than detracted from the value of Milton's arguments in modern censorship

debates -- particularly those currently under consideration in Canada.

Recently, Mr. Justice Scott Wright of the Court of Queen's Bench in Winnipeg, Manitoba, acquitted a local video store owner of two hundred and forty-two obscenity charges for stocking video material which, according to newspaper reports, contained scenes of homosexual bondage. Wright's fifty-page decision justified the acquittal through the use of distinctly Miltonic arguments:

> Every limit on the circulation of obscene expression involves the arbitrary removal of an individual's opportunity to make his or her choice . . . free choice is part of the bedrock of a democratic society. Temptation is necessary to allow people to choose -- to choose to be right-minded, or moral or not. . . . Without temptation, can free choice fully exist? (Canadian Press)

Whether or not Wright was directly inspired by Milton (the newspaper report gives no information about the source of Wright's philosophies) the arguments definitely originated with Milton:

> What wisdome can there be to choose, what continence to forbeare without the knowledge of evill? . . . . When God gave him [Adam] reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had bin else a meer artificiall *Adam*, such an *Adam* as he is in the motions. We our selves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force: God therefore let him free, set before him a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinance. (514, 527)

It is most interesting that Wright should choose Milton's arguments to justify the selling of pornography, but what is still more interesting is the reaction Wright's decision has received from his colleagues. For example, Canadian Press reports that constitutional

expert and lawyer Jack London "called the judgement brilliant." According to London, Wright's decision is of enduring value: "It should be required reading for every high school class in democratic government." The vast discrepancy between the total lack of interest shown to *Areopagitica* in 1644 and the great interest with which these same arguments are currently being received by London and others may be explained, at least in part, by the major societal changes that have occurred in the years since *Areopagitica* was first published. The most important of these changes is the shift from the monarchical and oligarchical systems of government of the seventeenth century to the democratic system now operating in the western world.

Despite the fact that Milton was addressing a government that saw itself as the decision maker for, and moral legislator of the people, Milton based his arguments on what seemed to him to be the only acceptable system for regulating moral choice: the individual's reason. It is not surprising, then, that the parliamentary government of 1644 should find little of relevance in *Areopagitica*, and it is equally logical that modern democrats should find the document thought-provoking and, to use London's word, "brilliant."

Naturally, the specific media problems faced by the Parliament of 1644 also had a great bearing on the document's reception. During the three centuries that have elapsed since *Areopagitica* was first published, the tense relationship that existed between the press and government has been somewhat alleviated by experience. The revolutionary government's traditional bias against personal freedoms was reinforced by their dread and fear of the powerful and

mysterious influence wielded by the press. Today, although politicians no doubt still quake at the prospect of a scathing press review, the outcomes of such reviews are predictable and the means for combating them are well understood. In any case, the concept of a free press has become so well entrenched in modern democratic societies that even when governments are incapable of combating negative press, legislated suppression remains an untenable solution. Thus, the reallocation of power between government and the voting public, and increased familiarity with the press must be credited with inspiring the modern appreciation of *Areopagitica*, but the current struggle to reconcile private beliefs to public standards of morality is the strongest reason for the connection between modern censorship debates and Milton's *Areopagitica*.

Inherent in the democratic system of government is the assumption that the wishes of the majority will prevail. Although these assumptions meet with wide approval in most cases, the issue of morality presents a unique stumbling block to this otherwise satisfactory system. In their study of censorship cases in Canada, authors Peter Birdsall and Delores Broten come to the following conclusion:

> Given today's large cities and diversity of moral standards, as well as the colossal and incredibly profitable market for pornography, 'community consensus' merely becomes the imposition of one minority's standards on those of another. (Birdsall 57)

This "imposition" is deemed unsatisfactory as it results in the violation of the principle of individual reason advocated by Milton. The legislation of morality was still considered an appropriate

governmental duty for the seventeenth-century parliamentarians, although the type and source of this legislation was hotly contested. John Goodwin and his party of Independents was, along with Milton, Lilburne, and Overton, among the first to argue for the liberation of individual consciences, but this idea remained unheeded for some time. Eventually, however, the powers of church and state were divided and the beliefs in freedom of conscience and religion became entrenched in both public expectations and in constitutional law. As the recent pornographic video tape decision indicates, however, these freedoms have not gone uncontested.

The unrestricted circulation of material advocating bigotry and sexual perversion has been successfully argued to have detrimental effects upon society as a whole, and has, on this basis, been censored. As Birdsall's and Broten's study indicates, the line between personal freedom to communicate potentially offensive material and public rights to prohibit dangerous material has not yet been clearly defined. A variety of different standards has been applied in an effort to assess contentious material. In some cases judgement has depended upon the literary or artistic merits of the work; in other cases even more arbitrary means have been used. The result of this confusion can be seen in conflicting decisions on the same issue by various Canadian judicial bodies, and in the vast inconsistencies in policing:

> There appears [sic] to be no legal criteria for distinguishing between pornography and erotica, or between pornography and literature. In addition, ways of gauging community standards are not provided by the Criminal Code. . . . The police and local prosecutors are confused about what types

> **of action they can or should take against porn dealers since they have no consistent legal council in the Criminal Code. (Birdsall 57)**

Given the present confusion over the question of governed morality, it is no surprise that Wright's reintroduction of Milton's arguments should be met with such applause. In *Areopagitica*, as Wright discovered, the answer to the tricky question of what and how much to censor can only be answered after a more basic fact is confronted: the unyielding, ubiquitous nature of evil. With the discovery that evil could never be eliminated even if everyone could agree on a categorisation of evil and good, the question of censorship turns back upon itself. The question is no longer how we get rid of evil, but rather how we deal with it: how does one live in the presence of evil but yet avoid it? It is this question that Milton answers so simply and eloquently in *Areopagitica*. The "immortal garland" of virtue "is to be run for, not without dust and heat"(515). Not everyone will strive toward virtue, and the efforts of those who do will be challenged by the actions of those who do not. The solution lies in learning to confront temptation rather than in attempting to eliminate it.

Were Milton's adversaries able to foretell that *Areopagitica* would be used to defend the most offensive of pornographic materials they would have no doubt derived much smug satisfaction from the knowledge. Milton himself would have been disgusted at this most blatant example of liberty being turned into license were he presented with the modern situation without the benefit of knowing life in the twentieth century. There is little doubt, however, that the same mind which, in 1644, could conceive of personal

freedom amidst tyranny and could communicate such a profound understanding of the nature of good and evil, could also see his way clear to *Areopagitica's* conclusions were he a member of contemporary society. The gravity of moral decay may very well be deemed by Milton to be more severe today than it was in his own time, but this change in degree does not alter the essential truthfulness of his solution.

Thus, although born out of an urgent need to respond to a very specific political circumstance, *Areopagitica* remains as relevant over three hundred years later as it was in its own time. As is the case with all truly great literature, Milton's timeless philosophies are presented to his readers in a prose style that is at once engaging and persuasive, challenging and complex. Through the literary beauty of *Areopagitica* Milton reaches across the centuries to touch the hearts and souls of his modern readership; through the depth of his understanding and the clarity of his thought he continues to motivate the practical change he so desperately desired for his own time.

Bibliography

Alighieri, Dante. *On Eloquence* in *Literary Criticism of Dante Alighieri*. Trans and Ed., Robert S. Haller. Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1973.

Allen, J.W. *English Political Thought, 1603-1694*. London : Methuen, 1938.

Aristotle, *Rhetoric*. Trans. W. Rhys Roberts. New York: Random House, 1954.

Augustine, St. *Christian Instruction*. John J. Gavigan, OSA Trans. The Fathers of the Church. Vol. 2. Ed. Roy Joseph Deferrari. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947.

Banks, Theodore H. *Milton's Imagery*. New York: Columbia U.P., 1950.

Barker, Arthur. *Milton and the Puritan Dilemma 1641-1660*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1942.

Barker, Francis. "In The Wars of Truth." *Southern Review -- Adelaide*. 20 (1987): 111-125.

Barker, Francis. *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays in the Subjection*. London: Methuen, 1984.

Birdsall, Peter and Delores Broten. *Mind War: Book Censorship in English Canada*. Victoria B.C.: Canlit, 1978.

Blum, Abbe. "The Author's Authority: *Areopagitica* and the Labour of Licensing." in *Re-Membering Milton*. Ed. Mary Nyquist and Margaret W. Ferguson. New York: Methuen, 1987: 74-96.

Bridgwater, William, et al., eds. *The Columbia-Viking Desk Encyclopedia*. 3rd ed. New York: Viking Press, 1968.

Canadian Press. "Video Porn a Charter right, Judge says." *Edmonton Journal*. 27 August 1989: A1.

Clark, G.N. *The Seventeenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929.

Collinson, Patrick. *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*. London: Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1967.

Cooper, Lane. *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932.

Copi, Irving M. *Introduction to Logic*. 5th ed. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1978.

Corns, Thomas N. *The Development of Milton's Prose Style*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.

Dole, Nathan Haskell. "Biographical Sketch." *The Poetical Works of John Milton*. David Masson, Ed. New York: T.Y. Crowell & Co., 1892.

Dowling, Paul M. "*Areopagitica* and *Areopagitcus:* The Significance of the Isocratic Precedent." *Milton Studies* XXI (1985): 49-69.

---. "Milton's Use (or Abuse) of History in *Areopagitica*." *Cithara* 23 (1983): 28-37.

Evans, John X. "Imagery as Argument in Milton's *Areopagitica*" *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 8 (1966): 193-4.

Fish, Stanley. "Critical Legal Studies Unger and Milton." *Raritan* 7 (1987): 1-20.

---. "Driving from the Letter: Truth and Indeterminacy in Milton's *Areopagitica*." in *Re-Membering Milton*. Ed. Mary Nyquist and Margaret W. Ferguson. New York: Metheun, 1987.

Fixler, Michael. *Milton and the Kingdoms of God*. Chicago: Northwestern U.P., 1964.

Fogle, French. "Historiography, Milton and the Seventeenth-Century." *A Milton Encyclopedia*. Ed. William B. Hunter, Jr. Lewisburg: Bucknell U.P., 1978: 185-193.

French, J. Milton. *The Life Records of John Milton*. 5 vols. New Brunswick: Rutgers U.P., 1949-1958.

---. "Milton as a Historian." *PMLA* L (1935): 469-479.

Gardiner, Samuel R. *History of the Great Civil War 1642-1649*. Vol. I. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1893.

Gatti, Hilary. "The 'Twenty Ingrossers' of Milton's *Areopagitica*." *Notes and Queries* 29 (1982): 498-499.

Gilman, Wilbur Elwyn. *Milton's Rhetoric: Studies in His Defense of Liberty*. New York: Phaeton Press, 1970.

Haller, William. "Before *Areopagitica*." *PMLA* 42 (1927): 875-900.

---. ed. *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution 1638-1647*. Vol. 1&3. New York: Columbia University Press, 1934.

Hamilton, K.G. "Structure of Milton's Prose." in *Language and Style in Milton*. Eds. Ronald David Emma and John T. Shawcross. New York: Ungar, 1967.

Henry, Matthew. *Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961.

Hill, Christopher, ed. *The English Revolution 1640*. London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., 1940.

---. *Milton and the English Revolution*. London: Faber and Faber, 1977.

Howell, Wilbur Samuel. *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton U.P., 1956.

Illo, John. "The Misreading of Milton." in *Radical Perspectives in the Arts*. Ed. Lee Baxandall. Harmondsworth: Penquin Books, 1972: 178-192.

Keeble, N.H. "The Way and the Ways of Puritan Story: Biblical Patterns in Bunyan and his Contemporaries." *English* 33 (1984): 209-232.

Kendall, Willmoore. "How to read Milton's *Areopagitica*." *The Journal of Politics* 22 (1960): 439-473.

Kendrick, Christopher. "Ethics and the Orator in *Areopagitica*." *ELH* 50 (1983): 655-691.

Kennedy, George. *Quintilian*. New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1969.

Kranidas, Thomas. "Polarity and Structure in Milton's *Areopagitica*." *English Literary Renaissance* 14 (1984): 175-190.

Limouze, Henry S. "'The Surest Suppressing': Writer and Censor in Milton's *Areopagitica* " *The Centennial Review* 24 (1980): 103-117.

Loewenstein, David A. "*Areopagitica* and the Dynamics of History. *SEL* 28 (1988): 77-93.

Masson, David. *The Life of John Milton*. Vol. 2. London: MacMillan & Co., 1871.

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. 1964.

Milner, Andrew. *John Milton and the English Revolution*. London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1981.

Milton, John. *Areopagitica* in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Vol 2. Ed. Ernest Sirluck. New Haven: Yale U.P., 1959.

---. *Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline* in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Ed. Don Wolfe. Vol. I. New Haven: Yale U.P.,1953.

---. *Reason of Church-Government* in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Ed. Don Wolfe. Vol. 1. New Haven: Yale U.P., 1953.

---. *The Second Defense of the People of England* in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton.* Ed. Don M. Wolfe. Vol. IV, part II. New Haven: Yale U.P., 1966.

Norlin, George, trans. *Isocrates.* 3 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 1929.

Ong, Walter J., S.J. *Milton's Logic* in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton.* Vol.8. Ed. Maurice Kelley. New Haven: Yale U.P., 1982.

Parker, William Riley. *Milton: A Biography.* Vol 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

Price, Alan F. "Incidental Imagery in *Areopagitica.*" *Modern Philology* XLIX (May 1952): 217-222.

Rice, Warner G. "A Note on *Areopagitica.*" *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 40 (1940): 474-481.

Siebert, Fredrick Seaton. *Freedom of the Press in England 1476-1776.* Urbana Il: The University of Illinois Press, 1952.

Sirluck. Ernest. "Background to *Areopagitica*" in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton.* Vol. 2. Ed. Ernest Sirluck. New Haven: Yale U.P., 1959.

---. *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton.* Vol. 2 New Haven: Yale U.P., 1959.

---. "Milton's Critical Use of Historical Sources." *Modern Philology* 50 (1953): 226-231.

Smallenburg, Harry R. "Contiguities and Moving Limbs: Style as Argument in *Areopagitica.*" *Milton Studies* 9 (1976): 169-184.

Stables, Joseph. "The Right to Write." *Globe and Mail* [Canadian National Edition] 19 August 1989: D7.

Stavely, Keith W. *The Politics of Milton's Prose Style.* New Haven: Yale U.P., 1975

"The Licensing Order of 1643." *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton.* Appendix "B". New Haven: Yale U.P., 1959.

Thomas, Donald. *A Long Time Burning: The History of Literary Censorship in England.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969.

Whitaker, Juanita. "'The Wars of Truth': Wisdom and Strength in *Areopagitica.*" *Milton Studies* 9 (1976): 185-201.

White, Helen C., Ruth C. Wallerstein and Ricardo Quintana. *Seventeenth-Century Verse and Prose.* Vol. 1. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951.

Widmer, Kingsley and Eleanor. *Literary Censorship: Principles, Cases, Problems.* San Francisco: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1961.

Wittreich, Joseph Anthony Jr. "Milton's *Areopagitica:* It's Isocratic and Ironic Contexts." Milton Studies 4 (1972): 101-115.

Wolfe, Don M. *Milton in the Puritan Revolution.* New York: Humanities Press, 1963.

Woodhouse, A.S.P. "Milton, Puritanism and Liberty." *The University of Toronto Quarterly* iv (1935): 497-498.